



THE LIBERTY "BOYS OF '76"

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

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Price 5 Cents.

THE LIBERTY BOYS IN NEW YORK; OR, HELPING TO HOLD THE GREAT CITY.

By HARRY MOORE.



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CHAPTER I.

IN THE HANDS OF THE BRITISH.

"Young man, do you know the fate that awaits all spies?"

"Well, sir, I can't say that I do."

"Then I will tell you. They are usually shot or hanged."

"Indeed?"

"Yes; and as you have been caught red-handed, as it were, I think that there is little doubt that you will end your days in one or the other of those ways."

It was evening of the 27th of August, of the year 1776. The battle of Long Island had just been fought, and had resulted in a victory for the British.

The patriot army had made as good a fight as possible, but had been driven back, and had taken refuge on Brooklyn Heights.

General Washington was anxious to know what the British intended doing, and to that end he had sent out spies to learn this, if possible.

Among the spies sent was a youth of eighteen years, named Dick Slater.

He was a bright, handsome boy, who was the captain of a company of youths of about his own age who were known as The Liberty Boys of '76."

They were brave as lions.

They had fought desperately on the field of battle that day, and had been complimented on their bravery by the commander-in-chief after the battle was ended.

And, as we have said, Dick, their captain, had been sent out as one of the spies.

The youth had already done good work as a spy, and his work had attracted the attention of General Washington.

So when he came to sending out more spies, he thought of the youth at once, and sent him.

But Dick had had a bit of bad luck.

While spying around the outskirts of the British encampment he had been come upon by a party of half a dozen red-coats, and had been seized and made a prisoner.

He was taken at once to the tent occupied by the commander-in-chief of the British army.

This was General William Howe, a bluff, red-faced man, who was now somewhat puffed up on account of his victory over the patriot force.

As soon as Dick was brought before him he had addressed the youth as given at the beginning of this story.

"But I am not a spy, sir," said Dick, meeting the general's gaze with apparent frankness.

"It is no harm to speak falsely when one's life is at stake, and in war times, too," thought the youth.

"You say you are not a spy?"

"That is what I do say, sir."

The British officer eyed the youth searchingly.

"Do you expect me to believe that?" he asked.

"I hope you will believe it, sir, for it is the truth."

"You say it is the truth that you are not a spy?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then what were you doing sneaking around the encampment?"

"I was just looking on out of curiosity, sir."

"Out of curiosity, eh?"

"Yes."

"You wanted to see how soldiers lived, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you were not trying to find out what was going on, with the view to returning to the rebel encampment and telling them all about it?"

"Oh, no, sir."

The general turned to a couple of officers who were seated in the tent listening to the conversation.

"What do you think, gentlemen?" he asked.

They eyed the youth searchingly.

He met the gaze of the two unflinchingly.

"Well," remarked one musingly, "I hardly know what to say, general. He is rather a bright-looking young fellow. To my mind he is just such a chap as might be depended on to do good spy work."

"I believe he is a rebel spy," said the other officer.

The youth shook his head.

"You are mistaken, gentlemen," he said.

"Where do you live?" asked General Howe.

"About three miles from here."

"On Long Island?"

"Yes."

"What are you doing so far from home?"

"I left home to-day as soon as I heard the firing, sir."

"Ah, you did?"

"Yes; I had never seen a battle, and wished to do so."

"That is it, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"And did you see the battle to-day?"

"Most of it, sir."

"How did you like it?"

"I liked it immensely, sir."

"You did, eh?"

"Yes."

"Where were you?"

"I was on a hill."

"On a hill, eh?"

"Yes; up in a tree."

"Ah, you must have had a good view of the battle."

"I did."

"And you had the satisfaction of seeing your rebel friends get nicely whipped, didn't you?"

"They are not my friends, sir. I am a loyal king's man."

"Are you, indeed?"

"I am."

"And you were glad we thrashed the rebels?"

"Yes."

The youth said this with apparent frankness, but to himself he said:

"Jove, I hate to say that, even to save my life. However, needs must when Old Nick drives."

The commander-in-chief of the British army eyed the youth searchingly.

Presently a grim smile came over his face.

"My boy, do you know what I think?" he asked.

The youth shook his head.

"I do not, sir."

"I think that you are a youth of wonderful nerve and coolness."

"Why so?"

"Why?"

"Yes."

"Because you stand up here so coolly and calmly, and tell such falsehoods in such a glib fashion."

"I am not telling you any falsehoods, sir," was the reply.

"And every word you have told me is the truth?"

"Yes."

"You are not a rebel?"

"No."

"Nor a spy?"

"No, sir."

"You are for the king?"

"I am, sir."

A grim smile appeared on the general's face.

"You would fight for the king, I suppose?"

"I would."

"You are willing to do anything and everything possible for the king?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very good. Then tell me all you know about the rebel army. Tell me how many men there are on the heights, yonder, and all about it."

The youth shook his head.

"I know nothing about the matters you ask about, sir," said Dick quietly.

"Bah!"

"You don't believe me?"

"I do not. I am confident that you are a rebel and a spy."

"You are mistaken."

"I don't think so. In fact, I believe you have been doing spy work for the rebels before to-day."

"I assure you that you are mistaken."

"Oh, of course you would say that."

"I say it because it is true."

The general made a gesture which Dick interpreted indicating unbelief, and stepped across and began a whispered conversation with the other two officers.

The youth's hands were bound behind his back, and a soldier had hold of either arm, so there would be no chance of his trying to escape.

He could only stand there, wait and trust to his luck to enable him to get out of the difficulty in which he was placed.

The "Liberty Boy" was impressed with the gravity of the situation.

He well knew that spies were given short shrift and long rope, as a rule.

Still the youth did not despair by any means.

He felt that his youth would help him. The British would not suspect him so quickly as they would a grown man. Of course, General Howe had accused the youth of being a spy, and had declared almost confidently that he was one, but at the same time Dick felt that the general was not certain of it.

"I don't think they will shoot or hang me right away, they would likely serve a grown man in like circumstances," he said to himself.

General Howe was asking his officers what they thought regarding the matter.

He asked them if they thought the youth really was a "rebel" spy.

They hardly knew what to say.

"It is possible that he is a spy," said one. "If you will notice, general, he is a particularly keen, intelligent-appearing young man—to my mind just such a young fellow as might be expected to undertake such dangerous work."

"He is a bright young chap, there is no doubt about that," from the other.

"You are right. He is a bright young fellow," agreed the general. "Jove, I don't know what to think about him."

At this moment the orderly stuck his head into the tent and announced:

"Captain Wainwright, sir."

"Show him in," said the general.

The heart of the prisoner sank as he heard these words.

A couple of days before Dick had been spying on the British, and had even ventured within the British lines, and had had some trouble with a captain named Wainwright.

the captain had accused him of being a "rebel," and Dick denied it, and finally the captain, who was a hot-tempered fellow, struck Dick. The youth retaliated, and knocked the captain down three times, and then made his escape from the encampment. He felt sure the captain could recognize him, and knew this would be bad for him, and the officer would have it in for him, and would brand him as a spy.

However, he could not help it. He would have to make the best of the matter, and so he stood there, to all appearances as calm as a May morning.

Inwardly, however, he was boiling with excitement, and was wishing that he could see a chance to make a dash for liberty.

Captain Wainwright entered the tent, and passing Dick and the two soldiers without giving them more than a casual glance, faced the general.

"I have come to report that the spies we sent out have returned, sir," he said, after saluting.

"Ah, what do they report?"

"That it would be practically impossible to storm the heights, sir."

"They think it could not be done, eh?"

"That is what they report, sir."

"Well, I think it likely they are right."

"Yes, so do I."

"Well, we whipped them to-day, and I believe that we can easily capture their entire force by simply laying siege to their stronghold."

"That is what I think, sir," said the captain, "and that will be much easier than to storm the position."

"Yes, and will result much less disastrously. We will not lose nearly so many men."

"You are right. We need lose scarcely any by laying siege."

"I think that is what we will do."

Then the general pointed toward Dick.

"Look behind you, captain," he said, "and tell me what you think of the prisoner."

The captain turned quickly, and looked squarely in Dick's face.

His underjaw dropped in surprise, and he stared in silence for a few moments.

Then a smile of delight and triumph came over his face.

"You wish to know what I think of the prisoner, General Howe?" he asked.

"Well, I can tell you in few words. I think you have captured a dangerous rebel spy."

"I do."

This was said in a very positive tone of voice.

"What makes you think so?"

"Past experience with the chap, your excellency."

"Past experience with him?"

"Yes."

"Then you have seen him before?"

The captain bowed.

"I have," he said.

"When?"

"The day before yesterday."

"Where?"

"In our encampment."

"He was in the encampment?"

"Yes."

"How came he there?"

"He sneaked in, and pretended that he wished to join the king's army."

"What makes you think he did not want to join, in reality?"

"His actions. I had a talk with him, and being suspicious of him, I accused him of being a rebel."

"Ah!"

"He denied it, and was so impudent as to practically tell me that I lied."

"Indeed? What did you do?"

"I struck him, and——"

"Then I knocked him down," said Dick quietly.

"Is that true?" asked the general.

"It is, your excellency," said the captain, flushing. "He took me unawares, and struck me when I was not thinking of such a thing, and——"

"You should have been thinking of such a thing," interrupted Dick. "Did you think I would stand there and let you strike me and not strike back?"

"He took me by surprise," went on the captain, glaring at Dick angrily, "and managed to knock me down. Then he made a break, and got away before anyone knew what was going on."

"He made his escape, eh?"

"Yes; I was confident that he was a spy, and I am more than ever sure of it now. When and where was he captured?"

"Half an hour ago, at the edge of the encampment."

"He was spying, you may be sure of that."

"That is what I think myself."

"You are wrong," said Dick. "I am not a spy."

"Yes he is, general," said the captain. "He is a rebel spy, and you will be doing a great thing for the king's cause if you hang him up to the limb of a tree."

"I think he is a spy, but will wait till to-morrow before deciding what shall be done with him."

"I would hang or shoot him first, and then think about the matter afterward," the captain declared viciously.

"You feel more bitter toward him on account of your experience with him, captain," said the general.

"I suppose that is true. Well, I can wait till to-morrow

CHAPTER II.

BOB TO THE RESCUE.

"Ah, you think so, do you, captain?" exclaimed the general.

to see him hang; but you had better have a good watch kept on him, or he will escape before then."

"Oh, I think there is no danger of that."

Then the commander-in-chief ordered Dick to be imprisoned.

"We'll see to it, your excellency," was the reply.

Then they led Dick out of the tent, and away to another tent at the farther side of the encampment.

They shoved the youth into the tent, and then sat down in front of the opening.

"Well, here is a pretty go," thought Dick. "I am a prisoner, tight and fast, and the chances seem to be good that I will be shot or hanged to-morrow."

The "Liberty Boy" did not like the outlook.

"I wish I could escape," he thought. "I wonder if there is any chance for me to get away?"

He began working at the rope which bound his wrists.

"If I could get my arms free," he thought, "I might slip out at the rear of the tent and get away, for I am close to the edge of the camp."

He worked steadily and energetically at the bonds.

"Whoever the fellow was who tied these knots, he did his work well," thought Dick. "I fear I shall not be able to loosen them."

He kept at work, however.

"If I could use my fingers on the knots, I could soon untie them," he told himself. "But I can't touch the knots with the ends of my fingers. All I can do is try to stretch the rope by main strength, and that seems to be a hopeless task."

Still he kept at work at the rope. He might in time stretch the rope sufficiently so he could free his hands, he hoped, rather than thought.

He could hear the voices of the two guards in front of the tent, and he was glad they were talking, as it would enable him to know when they were about to look into the tent, to see if he was still there. Whenever they ceased talking he ceased working at the bonds.

At last the guards ceased talking for the night, however, and after looking in and seeing the youth lying there, silent, and, as they supposed, asleep, they began pacing backward and forward on their beats.

Then Dick resumed his work, and pulled and tugged at the bonds at a great rate.

He kept at it for several hours, and then he thought he heard a noise at the rear of the tent.

He listened, and was sure he could hear something which sounded like the breathing of a human being.

"I wonder who it can be?" the youth asked himself.

Then the thought came to him that perhaps it was a horse.

He listened intently, and could not hear the sound such as is usually made by an animal cropping grass, however, and decided that it was not a horse.

"It must be a human being," Dick said to himself, "but who can it be, and what is he doing there?"

Presently he heard a low, cautious whisper.

"Dick," was the word he made out.

"It is some one who knows who I am," thought the youth. "It is a friend."

"Dick, are you there?" came in the faint whisper.

The youth rolled over a couple of times, until his face was against the back of the tent.

"Yes, I am here," he replied, in a cautious whisper.

"Thank God!" he heard the other voice whisper fervently.

Dick thought he recognized the voice, even though it was in a whisper, and very faint at that.

"Is that you, Bob?" he asked, in a low, intense whisper.

"Yes, yes. Just wait a moment, and I'll be in there with you."

There was a faint ripping sound, and Dick knew that his friend was cutting a slit in the tent.

Bob Estabrook was a member of the company of "Liberty Boys," and was Dick's chum and right-hand man. Of all the youths, Bob would be the one Dick would most have expected to see under such circumstances.

"Are your arms bound?" came in a faint whisper?"

"Yes, Bob; feel around and you will find the rope. Cut it."

"I will."

Soon Dick felt the fingers of his comrade, and then, with a couple of careful slashes of the knife the rope was severed.

The youth was free, in so far as bonds were concerned. The thing now, however, was to get away from the tent and camp in safety.

Dick was not at all sure they could do this. Still, Bob had succeeded in reaching the rear of the tent undiscovered, and it did look as if they ought to be able to get away.

"Can you crawl along on your hands and knees, Dick?" whispered Bob, "or are your arms too numb to use?"

"I can crawl, I think, Bob. Go ahead, and I will follow low."

"Could you run if it was necessary? Are your legs stiff?"

"No, they were not bound, and they are as good as even they were."

"Good! We may be discovered, in which case we would have to run for it."

"I will be able to give a good account of myself, old fellow."

"All right; come along—and be very careful."

"I will; go ahead."

Bob moved cautiously away on his hands and knees, and Dick crawled cautiously through the opening Bob had cut in the side of the tent and followed, also on all fours.

The youths moved very carefully.

They knew there were two redcoat soldiers on guard just on the other side of the tent, and they might hear the youths moving away, and give the alarm.

It was an exceedingly critical situation.

The youths' nerves were tense.

They were on a terrible strain, for they did not know

the escape of the prisoner might be discovered at any moment, when it would be necessary that they should run for their lives.

Slowly forward they crept.

It was slow and hard work, but was not the first work of the kind they had ever done, and the youths made as good a way as could have been made by anyone under such circumstances.

Onward they crept.

It was quite dark, and this was to the advantage of the "Liberty Boys," as it enabled them to get away without opening in much danger of being seen.

They would have got clear away, and out of the encampment in safety, doubtless, had not one of the guards taken into his head to make sure the prisoner was in the tent. He entered the tent only a few moments after Dick had left it, and spoke to the prisoner, saying:

"Where are you?"

Of course there was no reply, for Dick was not there.

"Are you asleep?"

Still no reply.

The guard then began feeling around on the ground with his feet. Every moment he expected to touch the body of the prisoner, but in this he was disappointed.

He felt all around, and failed to find the prisoner's body, and at once became alarmed.

"Has the fellow escaped?" he asked himself. "Jove, I hope not, for if he has we will catch it."

He dropped on his hands and knees, and felt around, and quickly found the slit in the tent.

"Quick, Sam, the prisoner has escaped!" he cried.

"You don't mean it?" the other gasped.

"Yes." And then they both set up a shout, and dashed away, in the direction in which they supposed the prisoner would have gone.

As they went they leveled and fired their muskets, and the bullets whistled dangerously near the fugitives—for the youths were now running at the top of their speed.

At the sound of the first cry from the sentinel they had leaped to their feet and dashed away.

"It's just a matter of speed and endurance now, Dick," said Bob.

The youths realized that there would soon be a hundred redcoats after them, and in this they were right.

The yells of the two guards and the firing of the muskets aroused the encampment, and soon all was confusion.

"Who is it?"

"What's the matter?"

"Are we attacked?"

"To arms!"

Such were a few of the cries, and then somebody cried out that the prisoner had escaped.

"The rebel spy has got away," was the cry. "After him, men!"

Soon a hundred soldiers were dashing through the darkness, and as they went they scattered out, in the hopes of running upon the youth who had gotten away.

They did not know it, of course, but they were chasing a couple of youths who were as fleet-footed as fawns.

The two "Liberty Boys" were splendid athletes, and had always taken a great pride in all kinds of athletic sports that were current in those days.

Among the sports that were indulged in in those days foot-racing was considered one of the greatest and most important, and the youths had always excelled in running.

They were not only very swift runners, but they had trained and practiced it so much that they were able to run for an hour at a stretch, and at practically their best speed.

This was something the British soldiers could not do, and it would have been only by the merest accident had they managed to catch the youths.

No accident favoring the British occurred, however, and after they had gone quite a distance without hearing anything of the escaping prisoner, they gave up the pursuit, and turned back toward the encampment.

"It would be an impossibility to catch the fellow, dark as it is," said one.

"Yes, indeed," from another.

The two soldiers who had been on guard over the tent in which Dick had been placed, continued the pursuit longer than any of their comrades, for they realized that the escape of the prisoner would be charged up against them, as being the result of negligence on their part, but even they gave it up as a hopeless case after awhile, and turned back.

CHAPTER III.

A CRY FOR HELP.

"How did you happen to put in an appearance and rescue me, Bob?" asked Dick, when they had become assured of the fact that they were no longer being pursued, and had settled down to a walk.

"I followed you, Dick, when you left the Heights, this evening, and saw you captured."

"Well, well."

"I feared you would be shot or hanged in the morning, and made up my mind to rescue you to-night."

"And did it, too?"

"Yes; at any rate we are safely away from the British encampment. We will have to look out that we don't run upon a small party of redcoats and get captured, however."

"True. There is danger of that."

They moved along very cautiously, for they did not wish to run into a party of redcoats.

They had gone perhaps half the distance to the Heights when suddenly they heard a cry for help.

Help! Help!" the voice cried.

It was a shrill voice, and evidently that of a woman.

"Where does it come from?" asked Bob.

"It is over to the left somewhere."

"And not far away."

"You are right."

"Let's move in that direction."

"Very well."

The two moved cautiously in the direction from which the cry for help had sounded, and presently Dick uttered an exclamation:

"I see a light."

"So do I," from Bob.

"There must be a house here."

"I think so."

Again the cry for help rang out, seeming closer at hand than before.

"Help! Help!"

The voice sounded clear and shrill, and then a moment afterward the same voice cried:

"Oh, sirs, please do not kill my husband!"

"Redcoats!" said Dick in a low voice.

"I think so, Bob."

"Threatening to kill the man of the house."

"Undoubtedly."

The youths hastened forward, and were soon at the window.

They looked through, and saw a scene which thrilled them with anger.

At one side of the room into which they were looking stood a man. His face was toward the youths, and there was a look of fear on his countenance. His back was to the wall.

In front of him, and threatening him with drawn swords, were seven redcoats.

At one side was a woman, and a girl of perhaps sixteen years. The woman and girl seemed terrified.

"Let's try the door, Bob," whispered Dick.

"Are you going to attack them, Dick?" whispered Bob, in great eagerness.

"I don't think we had better attack them, Bob, as they are seven, while we are but two. I have a mind to try a trick on them."

"Go ahead."

The youths moved along till they came to the door.

Dick tried the door, and found it unfastened. He pushed it open, and looked in. The scene still remained the same as when they had looked through the window.

"You surely have gold and silver concealed in the house, somewhere," said one of the redcoats, as the youths pushed the door open.

"I don't see why you should think so," said the threatened man.

"Because all the people of America have money."

"I don't see why you should have that idea."

"It is true. They told us in England, before we left there, that this is the richest country in the world, and that all the people have lots of gold and silver."

"You were told what is not true, then."

"Bosh. I don't believe you."

"You don't?"

"No. All Americans ought to be rich, for they don't turn in much to the king, and consequently they are piling up the gold and silver."

"That story is current in England, I suppose?"

"Yes, and we were told that we would soon get rich if we came to America."

"Get rich robbing the American people, eh?"

"Well, if you wish to put it that way. In war times, you know, soldiers do not have much consideration for the rights of the enemy."

"I suppose not."

"No, it is get all that is possible out of them, and kill them if they object."

"Well, I wish to inform you of the fact, sir, that you are wholly and utterly mistaken in your ideas regarding the Americans all being rich."

"I don't believe that I am mistaken."

"You don't?"

"No. You would say you have no gold or silver, and that the Americans are poor, of course, in order to keep from having to give up your gold and silver."

"But it is the truth, sir. I have no gold and silver, and the majority of people of America are in the same fix."

"Bosh."

"We have to send so much to the king, in the way of unjust taxes, sir, that it doesn't leave us much. We make bare living and that is all."

"Ha! unjust taxation, did you say?"

"Yes, I did say it, and I'll stick to it."

"Then you are a traitor to your king, sure enough, and by so acknowledging have forfeited your life."

Screams escaped the lips of the woman and girl, both of whom expected to see the husband and father cut down at once by the cruel swords of the soldiers.

"Oh, don't kill my husband, kind sirs."

"Please don't kill my father," pleaded the girl.

The redcoats paid no attention to them.

The leader of the party of soldiers shook his sword in the man's face.

"You scoundrelly rebel," he hissed, "if you do not tell us where your gold and silver is concealed we will cut you down on your own hearthstone."

The man turned paler still, but he was brave, and replied firmly:

"I have already told you that I have no gold and silver."

"But you lied in your throat when you said it."

"No, it is the truth."

"Indeed it is, sirs," cried the woman. "We have no gold or silver."

"Jove," cried the redcoat leader in a tone of disgust, "I believe you rebels hang onto your wealth with a tighter grip than most people would."

"But we have none to hold on to, sir," the man insisted.

"I cannot and will not believe you."

"He has gold, captain," growled one of the soldiers.

"He's just trying to fool us and get us to go away, and

then he will laugh at us. Let's slice off an ear, and then maybe he'll make up his mind to tell where his gold is concealed."

While this talk was in progress Dick and Bob were listening, and trying to decide upon a course of action.

The actors in the exciting scene were so interested that they did not glance in the direction of the youths, so of course did not know anyone was near other than themselves.

Dick and Bob whispered together a few moments, and then drew their pistols.

Bob remained standing near the door, but Dick walked calmly forward, and pausing within a few feet of the redcoats, said in a cool, calm voice:

"Hello, what's going on here?"

An exclamation of delight escaped the lips of the men, and the two women, while the redcoats whirled and glared at the bold intruder.

"Who are you?" roared the leader of the redcoats.

The youth looked the speaker straight in the eyes, and smiled in a quiet, tantalizing manner.

"Oh, you wish to know who I am?" he asked suavely.

"That is what I asked, and I want an answer, and quick, too!"

The youth lifted one of his hands and waved the pistol in a remonstrating manner.

"My dear, dear sir, don't get rash," he said calmly.

"Don't think that you are the master here, for you are not."

"And why not, pray? We have seven men, while you are but two."

"Two is all you see," said Dick significantly.

The redcoats craned their necks and tried to look out through the doorway, into the darkness.

"Oh, they're there," smiled Dick, "though you can't see them. They're there, and will come in here, and kill the last one of you fellows if you get too frolicsome."

"What do you want?" the redcoat asked.

"I want you fellows to get out of this house."

"To—get out—of—this house?"

"Yes, and in a hurry, too."

Dick and Bob had decided to play what in these days would be called a game of "bluff," and it seemed that they might win.

The redcoats stared at one another, and it was plain that they hardly knew what to think.

Then they craned their necks and looked through the doorway, in a vain effort to see the mythical men who were supposed to be there.

"Oh, you can't see them; but they're there," said Dick; "and now, are you going to go? Or shall I be forced to call my men in and set them upon you?"

"I don't believe there are any men out there, captain," said one of the redcoats, growlingly.

"Oh, you are somewhat in doubt regarding the matter, are you?" remarked Dick.

"Yes, I am," doggedly, "and I wouldn't give up, if I were you, captain."

"The captain can do as he likes about it," said Dick,

calmly, "all I have to say, however, is that he will be acting very foolishly if he does not quietly leave this house and get away from the vicinity."

"What will happen if I don't choose to do so?" asked the leader.

"Well, you will all be killed, that is what will happen."

This was spoken in a calm, matter-of-fact manner, and there was something about the speaker's appearance that impressed the redcoat in spite of himself.

"He's trying to scare you out, captain," said the soldier who had spoken before.

The man, woman, and girl of the house were listening to the conversation eagerly and anxiously. They hoped the redcoats would go away, but feared they would not.

The "Liberty Boy" now addressed them.

"Sir," said Dick to the man. "Please conduct your wife and daughter from the room. There will probably be trouble here in a very short time, and this will be no place for them; bullets will be flying thick and fast, and they are no respecters of persons."

"Hadn't you better wait till I say you may go?" asked the leader of the redcoats angrily.

"No, he hadn't better do anything of the kind," said Dick, sternly. "Go along, sir, and if either of the redcoats attempts to interfere with you, it will be the worse for them."

"Come, wife; come, Annie," said the man, and the three left the room.

"See here. I think you are taking too much control here," said the redcoat leader, angrily; "you had better prove that you have the authority before you begin exercising it so briskly."

"Oh, I have it, you may be sure," said Dick.

"I don't believe it," was the sullen reply, "and for a very little I would open up on you and put the matter to the test."

Of course Dick did not wish this to happen. He and Bob would give a good account of themselves, so far as that was concerned, but they could not hope to defeat seven men, and he did not wish to get into a fight with the soldiers.

"Before starting the trouble," said the "Liberty Boy," calmly, "you had better step outside and take a look about you. I think that will satisfy you of the folly of trying to resist."

"How many men have you out there?"

"A dozen."

"A dozen, eh?"

"Yes."

"Humph!"

"You don't believe it?" remarked Dick.

"I certainly do not for one," said the soldier who had had so much to say.

"Neither do I," said the leader.

"You think the men are not there?"

The youth spoke coolly and calmly, although he realized that there was a good chance that he and Bob would soon

be in a life or death fight with nearly four times their number.

"That is just what I think," was the reply.

"And you absolutely refuse to believe that the dozen men are out there?"

"I most assuredly do refuse to believe it. I will not believe it till I have seen them."

"Then take a look at us," said a cool voice, and into the room filed twelve bronzed and handsome youths.

CHAPTER IV.

DICK AND BOB CAPTURE SOME REDCOATS.

The newcomers were members of Dick Slater's band of "Liberty Boys."

Their appearance there at that moment was really more of a surprise to Dick and Bob than it was to the redcoats, for the two youths had had no suspicion of their presence, and were not looking for them at all.

The redcoats, on the other hand, while they had professed to think there was no one outside, had not been at all sure of it, and so they were not so surprised as were the two "Liberty Boys."

"Well, where in the name of all that is wonderful did you fellows come from?" almost gasped Bob.

"Oh, we just dropped in to see you," grinned Mark Morrison, who was the leader of this party, and was a great chum of Dick and Bob.

"You certainly dropped in at the right time," said Dick.

Each and every one of the newcomers held a pistol in each hand, and the redcoats, although they had their swords out, were at a great disadvantage.

They stared at the newcomers in open-mouthed wonder.

Dick now turned his attention to the redcoats, and addressed the leader, saying:

"Well, what do you think about it now?"

"I see that they were there, as you stated," was the reply, "but I gather from your conversation that you yourself did not know they were there."

"Quite right," smiling blandly. "I was ignorant of their presence, and their coming in at the right moment was as much of a surprise to me as to you, perhaps more so."

"They are your men, though?"

"Yes."

"Humph. Well, I guess that myself and comrades might as well be going, then. It really looks as if we have been beaten for this time."

The leader made a motion to his men, and they sheathed their swords. Dick waited till they had done this, and then he said, blandly:

"You will please not be in any hurry about starting to go away, my friends."

"Why, there is nothing further for us to stay for," the leader said.

"Oh, yes, there is."

"What?"

"You will stay because it gives us pleasure to have you do so."

The redcoats looked worried.

They exchanged glances, and it was plain that they did not fancy the turn things had taken.

"You might as well let us go," growled the leader. "What good will it do to keep us here?"

"It will do a good deal of good."

"I don't see how."

"It is very simple; we are going to take you prisoner. Surrender, all!"

The redcoats turned pale.

"Surrender?" they cried in chorus.

"Yes."

"Why should we surrender? Why do you wish to take us prisoners? Who are you?" The leader asked these questions in rapid succession.

"We are 'The Liberty Boys of '76'."

Cries of surprise and consternation escaped the lips of the redcoats.

They had heard the youths, and felt that they were helpless, for they knew the "Liberty Boys" were brave and fearless.

"You say—you are—the—'Liberty Boys'?" gasped the leader.

"We are the 'Liberty Boys.' Do you surrender?"

"Yes, we surrender," was the reply.

"That is sensible," said Dick. "You would be fools to try to resist."

"You would simply doom yourselves to certain death by doing so," said Bob.

"Place your hands behind you, and turn your backs this way," ordered Dick.

The redcoats obeyed.

"Bob, you and Mark remove the belts of the prisoners, take out the weapons, and then strap their wrists together with the belts," ordered Dick.

The youths obeyed, and in ten minutes' time had disarmed the redcoats and bound their wrists with the belts.

The redcoats were a disgusted-looking set of men, and they looked down their noses when the man of the house and his wife and daughter re-entered the room.

"Are you Dick Slater?" asked the man, approaching Dick.

"Yes."

"I was sure of it, when I heard you say these young men were 'The Liberty Boys of '76.' Dick Slater, I am glad to know you."

He shook hands with Dick, and then introduced his wife and daughter.

"My name is Sam Hargrave," he said, "and this is my wife, and this my daughter Annie."

Dick greeted the woman and girl pleasantly, and the

thanked him warmly for coming in at such an opportune time and putting a stop to the doings of the redcoats.

"I believe that you saved my husband's life," whispered the woman. "I am sure those fiends would have killed him, and I can not thank you enough for what you have done for me."

"That is all right, Mrs. Hargrave," said Dick. "You are more than welcome."

Then Dick turned to his "Liberty Boys."

"We will be going, boys," he said; "there are seven of the redcoats and fourteen of us, so there will be two of us to look after each one of the prisoners."

Dick and Bob took hold of the arms of the leader of the redcoats, and led the way out of the house, bidding the three members of the family good-night, and the other youths did the same.

They were soon out in the road, and marching toward the Heights.

They kept a sharp lookout, for they thought it possible that they might run upon another party of British soldiers, but they were not so unfortunate as to do so, and soon arrived at the Heights.

They went at once to the house occupied by General Putnam, who was in command there, that night.

They entered the house, leading their prisoners, and found Putnam and three or four more patriot officers there.

The officers were surprised, and stared at the "Liberty Boys" and their prisoners in amazement.

"Hello, Dick," greeted General Putnam. "What have you there?"

"Some prisoners, sir," was the reply.

"Ah, ha; where did you get them?"

"Half a mile away, sir, in a farmhouse."

"In a farmhouse?"

"Yes."

"What were they doing?"

"Threatening the life of the farmer."

"Ha! for what reason?"

"They seemed to think he had gold and silver concealed, and were trying to force him to tell where the money was hidden."

"Oh, that was what they were doing, eh?" eyeing the prisoners sternly, and with a scornful look in his eyes.

"Yes, sir; they seem to be laboring under the impression that all Americans are rich, and have gold and silver in such plenty as to have to conceal it about their homes."

General Putnam laughed rather harshly.

"You fellows will have to dismiss such ideas from your minds, at once," he said. "The people of America have been unable to get money ahead for the reason that they have to send it all over to King George, to help support him in idleness."

"We were told in England before we left there, that the people of America were all rich," said the leader of the redcoats.

"Well, that is a great mistake, as you will soon find. You need not expect to get immensely rich by reason of

plundering the people of America, for you will be sadly disappointed."

The redcoat leader made no reply, but he looked as if a bit ashamed of himself.

"Tell me all about your capture of these men," said Putnam to Dick.

The youth did so, and the grizzled old veteran laughed when he heard of the bold manner in which Dick and Bob had faced the seven redcoats in the house, and pretended that they had a lot of men outdoors.

"It was lucky for you two youngsters that some more of your crowd happened to be on hand," he remarked when Dick had finished.

"You are right," smiled Dick. "And Bob and I were more surprised when the boys walked in than the redcoats here were."

The general and his fellow officers laughed, and one remarked: "You are a lucky fellow, Dick."

"Well, it's better to be lucky than not, sir," the youth replied.

"I should say so."

"Take the prisoners away, and put them in the guard-house," ordered General Putnam, and the "Liberty Boys" left the room and house with the prisoners. Just as Dick was leaving, however, the general told him to wait, so he did not go with the rest, but remained in the room.

"I wish to ask you a few questions, Dick," said General Putnam.

"Very well, sir," was the reply.

"You were out on a spying expedition, were you not, Dick?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you learn anything of importance?"

"No, sir, nothing of very great importance. I was captured, and did not get much chance."

"You were captured, you say?" in surprise.

"I was."

"But how did you escape?"

"Bob Estabrook rescued me."

"Indeed? Tell me all about it."

The youth did so.

Exclamations of surprise escaped the lips of the hearers when they heard of the clever manner in which the youths had made their escape, and the lively chase they had led their pursuers.

"You were very fortunate in making your escape, Dick," said General Putnam, when he had heard all. "And now, did you hear any talk at all that would give an indication as to what the British intend doing?"

"Yes, I heard a spy who had been sent out by the British general make his report, and he said that it was his opinion that the Heights could not be successfully stormed."

"Did he make this report in your presence?" the general asked, looking thoughtful.

"Yes."

"Then it must be taken cautiously. I would not base

much reliance in anything that was said openly in your presence."

"But I was a prisoner, General Putnam, and they did not expect that I would escape."

"I know; but there is always a possibility of such a thing, and it would not be good generalship or good sense to discuss matters of moment before a spy from the other side, even though he were a prisoner."

"Well, I tell you just what was said, and how it was, sir, and you can take it for what you think it is worth."

"Was anything else said?"

"There was something said about laying siege to the Heights, sir."

"Ah! Well, that may have been said for effect, also."

"It is possible, sir."

The general turned to his companion officers.

"You have heard Dick's statement of what was said by the spy and by General Howe," he said. "Now what do you think about it? Would you place credence in the words of the British general and his spy, or not?"

There was some diversity of opinion among the officers. One or two thought that it was all right, and that the British general was so sure he would get to see Dick shot or hung on the morrow as to have no hesitation in speaking just what he really thought in his presence; but the rest were doubtful, and, like Putnam, thought it likely that it was a trick, intended to throw the enemy off its guard in case such a thing should happen as that Dick should make his escape.

"I think it will be safest and best to not place much faith in what was said by General Howe and his spy," said General Putnam finally.

"It will be best to be on our guard against an attack, at any rate," replied one.

Then General Putnam again turned to Dick.

"Is there anything else that you learned while there, Dick?" he asked.

"Nothing else, sir," with a shake of the head.

"Very well. You have done very good work, my boy, in venturing as you did. In future, however, you had better be more careful, and not take such chances. You escaped, this time, but next time you might not do so."

"I will be as careful, always, as is possible, sir," said Dick.

"Yes; for those redcoats will stretch the neck of a patriot spy with as little compunction as if he were a dog."

"I think they would probably have made an end of me in the morning," said Dick with a smile.

"Not a bit of doubt regarding it. Well, you may go now if you like. Good-night, my boy."

"Good-night, sir, and the rest of you," and then Dick went to the quarters occupied by his "Liberty Boys."

CHAPTER V.

LIVELY TIMES.

Next morning the patriots on the Heights were astir early, and were watching the British closely.

It was thought more than likely that the redcoats would make an attack.

General Putnam sent for Dick.

"I wish you to go over to New York with a message to the commander-in-chief, Dick," he said.

"All right, sir," replied the youth.

The general wrote rapidly for a few moments, then folded and sealed the letter and handed it to Dick.

"You had better tell the commander-in-chief what you learned down in the British encampment last night, Dick," the general said. "He may be able to size the matter up better than I have done."

"Very well, sir."

The youth placed the letter in his pocket and took his departure.

He was soon across the river, and made his way straight toward Fraunce's Tavern, where General Washington had his headquarters.

In going from the dock to the tavern Dick had to pass through some narrow, crooked streets, and past some low dives, resorts for sailors and hard characters of all kinds.

He had gone perhaps a block, and as he was passing a dram-shop three men leaped out and seized him.

The youth struggled fiercely, but the men were strong fellows, and had seized him in such a manner that they had him at a disadvantage, and he was dragged into the dram-shop in spite of his struggles.

There was only one man in the place, and he was the bartender, or possibly the proprietor. He was a villainous-looking man, and seemed to be one who would do almost anything, or permit almost anything to be done in his place for money.

The three men dragged Dick back through the main room, and through a doorway, into another and smaller room at the rear.

This room was next to the alley, as Dick could see by looking through a window.

One of the men closed the door, and fastened it, and then while the other two held Dick, he advanced and said with a leer:

"I'll just ask you a few questions, my fine young fellow."

"Ask ahead," replied Dick, quietly.

"Who are you?"

"None of your business."

The two who were holding Dick gave him a shake.

"Don't be saucy," growled one. "Keep a civil tongue in your head, and it will be better for you."

"Indeed?" remarked Dick.

"Yes," the man who had asked the question went on; "I won't pay you to get too saucy, young fellow. I ask again, who are you?"

"I'm King George's son."

Again the men shook the youth.

"You think you are smart," hissed one, "but you are a dangerous place, let me tell you, and we'll take all the smartness out of you before we get through with you."

"Where were you going so fast when we stopped you, just now?" the man asked.

"I was going home."

"Bosh! Tell the truth, now. You were on your way to the rebel headquarters, weren't you?"

"No."

"See here, we know better," the man declared. "You are from Brooklyn Heights, aren't you?"

"No."

The youth had made up his mind to deny everything, give the fellows as little information as possible, and watch for a chance to escape.

He was confident that he had fallen into the hands of three British spies.

"You needn't lie to us," the man cried. "We saw you come across the river in a boat, and know you came from the Heights."

"If you knew it why did you ask me?"

"We wanted to see if you would tell the truth."

"I don't tell anything else."

"Bah! I'm beginning to think that we have captured the champion liar of America."

"Oh, no; you are mistaken."

"You were on your way to headquarters, young man, and we know it, and what we wish to find out is, what were you going there for?"

"You are entirely mistaken. I wasn't going there."

"I know better. You were going there to see General Washington, and we want to know what you were going to say to him when you got there."

"I was going to say 'Good-morning.'"

Again the two shook the youth.

"You had better tell us what you were going to say to the rebel commander-in-chief."

"I wasn't going to say anything to him. I wasn't going there."

The man drew an ugly-looking knife from his belt under his coat.

"Do you see this?" he asked, holding it up.

"Yes, I see it."

"Well, you can tell us what you were going to say to the rebel commander-in-chief, or have this run into your heart! Now take your choice."

The youth eyed the man searchingly.

He decided that the fellow was quite capable of putting his threat into execution.

Of course, Dick had not been intending to say anything to the commander-in-chief; he had a written message to him from General Putnam, and what was bothering Dick now was the thought that this written message might fall into the hands of these three British spies.

He made up his mind that he must make his escape, but he hardly knew how he was to accomplish it. He might make a fight against them, but they were three to one, and the odds were very much against him. Still, if he could take them by surprise, he felt that he might succeed in getting away. One thing he had taken note of, and that was that

the two who held him were not holding him very tightly. Evidently they thought they had him tight and fast, in the little room, and that there was no danger of his trying to make an escape.

"Surely you wouldn't murder me?" asked Dick, pretending to be frightened. He trembled as if greatly frightened, and his voice trembled, also.

This deceived the three men. They thought the youth really was frightened, and they exchanged looks of triumph. They thought they would succeed in getting the information they sought out of the youth.

"Surely we will kill you if you don't do as we tell you," said the man, fiercely. "Now tell what you were going to say to the commander-in-chief when you got there."

"I—I—really wasn't going—to—to say anything to him, sir," stammered Dick, trembling. "Please, sir, d-don't—kill—me!"

"Then tell what you were going to say to General Washington," hissed the man.

"I—really wasn't going there at all, sir," said Dick. "You may not—believe—me, but it—it is the—the truth."

The man took a step nearer, and lifted the knife on high.

"You will tell, or die in your tracks," he hissed. "If you don't tell you will never leave this room alive."

The "Liberty Boy" realized that the matter was becoming serious. If he refused to tell, the probabilities were that the spies would kill him. They looked like desperate men, who would not hesitate to take human life.

Dick made up his mind that he would make one supreme effort to escape. The two who had hold of him were not holding him very tightly, and of a sudden he leaped backward, jerking loose from their grasp as he did so.

The two whirled, with snarls of rage, and leaped toward Dick, but the youth was ready for them, and met them with two strong blows, delivered straight from the shoulder, one with the right fist, the other with the left.

Down went the two spies with a crash, and with a snarling roar the man with the knife leaped forward, and made a vicious stroke with the weapon.

The youth dodged and the knife did no more damage than to rip his right sleeve open.

Seeing that this was his opportunity, Dick struck out with all his might. The fist took effect on the man's jaw, flooring him as if he had been struck by a battering-ram.

The other two spies were leaping to their feet, now, and whirling, Dick dealt them each a blow on the jaw, knocking them down a second time.

As he turned the man with the knife was scrambling up; he was dizzy and somewhat dazed, however, and before he could get his mind cleared sufficiently to enable him to make an attack, the youth dealt him another terrible blow, which knocked him down. This time he lay still. He was senseless.

The other two were struggling up, however, and feeling that it would be best to make a good job of it, Dick waited till the two had reached a standing position, and gave them two more blows, sending them down again.

They were rendered unconscious this time, and feeling that it would be safe to do so, Dick turned his attention to the door. It was locked, but he quickly unlocked it, passed through, closed the door, and hastened toward the front entrance.

The proprietor, or bartender, was busy behind the bar, but when he glanced around and saw Dick a cry of amazement and consternation escaped his lips. He glanced quickly toward the door, saw it was closed, and that the three men were not in sight, and seizing a quart bottle filled with liquor, he leaped out and confronted Dick.

"Back!" he cried, brandishing the bottle. "Back, or I'll brain you."

But Dick was not in a mood to be stopped in this manner. He felt that he had already earned his freedom, and like a flash he drew a pistol.

"Out of my way," he cried, still advancing. "Out of my way, or I'll brain you."

"With a snarl of rage the man leaped toward Dick, the bottle held poised in the air, ready to be used as a weapon.

Crack!

Dick had fired a shot from his pistol, and the bullet broke the bottle into a thousand fragments.

As the man was holding the bottle high in the air, and almost above his head, the liquor streamed down upon his head, and getting in his eyes, caused him to go hopping around, coughing and sneezing, and spluttering at a great rate.

"Ow-wow!—ugh! Oh, blazes, but—I-I'm s-stranglin'!" gasped the fellow, but Dick did not care if he was; in fact, he was rather glad of it.

"Serves the scoundrel right," the youth said to himself, and then he started to pass the fellow, and go on out, when three men entered at the front doorway.

The newcomers stopped stock still and stared in open-mouthed amazement at the queer spectacle of the bartender hopping, leaping, and spluttering.

"What's the matter with Jim?" cried one.

"He's having a fit," cried Dick, who feared the newcomers might take it into their heads to try to keep him from getting out of the place. "Grab him, you fellows. I've been trying to hold him, and can't."

"Don't b-believe h-him, boys," spluttered the bartender. "He's l-lyin' to you. Don't let him get a-away. Grab him."

The three men, who had started to grab the bartender, stopped at this, and turned to seize Dick. He was running toward the door, however, and only one of the three succeeded in getting between him and the exit. This fellow struck at the youth, but Dick ducked, and the man's fist went over his shoulder. Then out shot Dick's fist, and crack! it landed fair on the fellow's jaw.

It was a strong blow, and down the fellow went with a crash. He was a big fellow, and when he struck the floor it jarred the bottles behind the bar.

The other two leaped forward, with cries, and attempted to grab Dick, but he was too quick for them. He was out at the doorway, and away at full speed in a twinkling.

The two followed Dick to the street, and yelled at him to stop, but he paid no attention to them other than to look back over his shoulder and laugh at them.

"Let him go," said one. "I guess he don't amount to much, anyway."

When they went back into the saloon they found their comrade on his feet, dizzy from the effects of the blow, and wild with rage.

"Where is the young scoundrel?" he cried. "Did you catch him?"

"No, he got away," replied one.

"Blast him! Never mind, though. I'll run across him one of these days, and then I'll get even with him for the clip he gave me."

They now turned their attention to the bartender, and when he had washed the liquor off his face, and out of his eyes, and could talk, he explained what it was all about.

"Go back into the rear room and see what the young scoundrel has done to the three men," the bartender said as he swept the broken glass away from the middle of the room, and the three men hastened back to the rear room and opening the door, looked in.

There lay the three men, insensible, and the bartender and the other three stared in amazement.

"Well," drawled one, "I must say that I think the young fellow is a terror when it comes to fighting."

And the others nodded assent.

CHAPTER VI.

DICK TO THE RESCUE.

Dick Slater, having made his escape from the saloon, hastened onward, and was soon at Fraunce's Tavern.

He was shown to General Washington's room at once.

"I am glad to see you, Dick," he said. "What is the news from across the river?"

"Everything was quiet when I left there, your excellency," the youth replied. "Here is a letter from General Putnam."

He handed the letter to the commander-in-chief, who took the letter, opened and read it.

"Ah, Putnam thinks that I had better come over with all the force available, and be ready to resist the British if they attempt to storm the Heights," the great man said aloud, but as if speaking to himself.

Then he placed the letter in a drawer of his desk, and turned to Dick.

"Putnam says you were a prisoner in the British encampment last night, Dick, and that you heard a conversation between a spy and General Howe."

"Yes, sir; that is correct."

"Repeat the conversation, Dick."

The youth did so.

The commander-in-chief listened intently, and with a

of interest, and when Dick had finished the great man was silent for two or three minutes. He was pondering deeply, and Dick stood there patiently awaiting the general's pleasure.

Presently General Washington looked up and said to Dick

"Go back to the Heights and tell General Putnam that I said I would be over there at the earliest possible moment, with all the force available, so as to be ready to give the British a warm reception in case they attempt to storm the Heights."

The youth bowed.

"Very well, sir," he said. "Is there anything else you wish me to say to the general?"

"No, that is all; you may go."

The youth saluted and withdrew.

He left the house and hastened away in the direction of the river.

He went a different way from the one he had used in coming, so he did not wish to be seen by the British spies, and get into trouble with them again. Still, he did not much fear meeting them, for he reasoned that they would be afraid they might be captured if they remained in the city.

He did not have any adventure during the return trip, and half an hour later was back in the patriot encampment on the Heights.

He went at once to General Putnam, and told him what the commander-in-chief had said.

"Good!" said Putnam. "When he gets here with the rest of the army we will be strong enough to beat the British off without much trouble, if they attempt to storm our position."

"I think so, sir," said Dick.

"I'll tell you what you may do, Dick, if you like," said the general. "I will depute you a spy, with the privilege of coming and going as you please, and if you can find out anything regarding the intentions of the British I shall be very glad."

"All right, sir; I will do what I can."

The "Liberty Boy" saluted and took his departure.

He was greatly pleased by the privilege that had been accorded him by the general. He liked nothing better than the work of spying on the enemy.

He hastened to the "Liberty Boys" headquarters, and told Bob that he was going out on a scouting and spying expedition.

"Well, be careful, Dick," Bob cautioned. "Don't let the redcoats gobble you up like they did last night."

"I'll try and not do so, Bob."

Then Dick hastened away.

He left the Heights, going down the opposite side from the one on which the British encampment lay, and then stole around and started in the direction of the enemy's camp.

The youth was well aware that he would need to be very

careful. It was broad daylight now, and he was likely to be seen by some of the redcoats at any moment.

He was skilled in the art of stealing through the timber and underbrush, however—was almost as skillful as the red Indian of the forest, in fact—and he felt sure that he would be able to detect the presence of an enemy as quickly as the enemy would detect his presence.

There was some timber between the Heights and the British encampment, but it was scrubby, and not very heavy; the underbrush was quite thick, however, and this made it easy for Dick to steal along in comparative safety.

He kept a sharp lookout, however, and occasionally paused and listened intently for a few minutes.

He had keen hearing, and was sure that if there were any redcoats near he would hear them.

He made his way along till presently he came in sight of the home of Mr. Hargrave.

He paused and looked in that direction carefully.

He was wondering whether or not he had better venture to the house.

While he stood looking he saw a girl emerge from the door at the rear of the house and go to a well which was nearby.

She drew a pail of water, and was on the point of starting back to the house when a British soldier darted out from behind the house and faced the girl.

The "Liberty Boy" stood perfectly still and watched the scene with eager eyes.

He saw the girl drop the pail and start backward, and the next instant the redcoat leaped forward and attempted to catch the girl in his arms, while a scream escaped her lips, and she dodged past the fellow and ran toward the house.

The redcoat was too swift for her, however, and overtook and grasped the girl before she could get into the house.

"Now I will have a dozen kisses from those pretty lips of yours, my pretty maiden!" he cried exultingly.

But he was destined to be disappointed.

Dick Slater had leaped forward the instant the girl gave utterance to the scream, and he ran with the speed of the wind, and was upon the scene by the time the redcoat seized the girl and gave utterance to the words quoted.

"You will do nothing of the kind!" cried Dick, and he seized the redcoat by the collar and jerked him away.

As he felt the grip on his collar and heard the youth's voice, the redcoat let go his hold on the girl, and whirled on Dick.

"I'll show you how to interfere where you are not concerned," the soldier hissed, and he grappled with Dick.

Perhaps he thought that as the youth was a young fellow he would have no trouble in getting the better of him, but if so he was speedily undeceived, for Dick was too strong and athletic for his opponent.

Realizing this, the fellow attempted to draw a knife—indeed, he did draw a knife, and attempted to use it against the "Liberty Boy."

Seeing that it was likely to be for life or death, Dick suddenly exerted his strength and threw the redcoat.

In some manner the soldier's hand, in which was the knife, was twisted around till it was behind him, and he fell on the point of the knife, and the weapon penetrated into his body the full length of the blade.

A gasping groan escaped his lips.

"Ah-h-h-h-h!" he gasped; "I am—a—dead—man!"

Then, with a few convulsive struggles, he died.

The girl had paused at the doorstep, and had remained a silent and frightened spectator of the encounter, and now she gave utterance to a little cry of terror, and gasped:

"Oh, Mr. Slater, is—is—he—is he dead?"

"Yes, Miss Annie," the youth replied, doffing his hat and bowing. "I did not intend to kill him, but he fell upon the point of his knife and was accidentally killed."

"Oh-h-h-h-h! Isn't it—isn't it—terrible?"

The beautiful girl was plainly greatly agitated.

War was new to her, and she had never before looked upon such a scene as this.

It was the first time she had ever seen a man die a violent death, and it seemed a terrible thing.

"Yes, indeed, it is terrible, Miss Annie," replied Dick, soberly. "We were not to blame, however; the man should not have offered you insult."

"True; but, Dick—Mr. Slater, will not you get yourself into serious trouble on account of this?" and she glanced around her with a frightened look in her eyes. "Supposing some of this man's friends were near and had seen this? Your life would pay the forfeit."

"I think he was alone, Miss Annie."

"You do?"

"Yes; otherwise his comrades would have been upon the scene before this."

"Perhaps so, but—I am—am sorely afraid."

"You need not be. I think there is no danger of anything bad coming from this."

"But what—what will you—do with—with this?" and she indicated the still form of the dead soldier.

"I will carry it away, out of your sight, Miss Annie."

"Can you—can you carry—it?"

"Oh, yes; I am strong."

"If you can't, I—I will—help you."

The girl tried to appear brave, but it was evident that it would have required more courage than she was possessed of to enable her to lay a hand on the dead man's form.

"I will attend to the corpse, Miss Annie. You go and get a spade, and bring it to me. I will be yonder in the edge of the timber," and he pointed.

"Very well," and the girl hastened to a woodshed which stood not far away, and entered.

The youth stooped, and taking hold of the dead man's form, lifted it, and moved quickly away. When the girl emerged from the woodshed Dick was almost to the edge of the timber.

Annie followed at a moderate pace, and when she entered the timber she found Dick waiting for her. The body was

not in sight. Dick had placed it around on the farther side of a clump of bushes.

"Where is—it?" the girl asked, in a low voice.

"Beyond the bushes there, Annie."

The youth took the spade from the girl's outstretched hands, and continued:

"You return to the house, Annie. I will join you presently."

"Very well," and she turned and walked to the house and entered.

As soon as the girl was gone Dick walked around to the farther side of the clump of bushes and proceeded to take the uniform off the dead man's form.

"He won't need it any more," said the youth to himself "and perhaps I can use it to good advantage."

He soon had the uniform removed, and then he dug a grave and interred the dead man. Covering the form over Dick took up the clothing and walked to the house.

He placed the spade in the woodshed, and then entered the house. The girl started when she saw the uniform.

"Is that—his——" she stammered, and Dick said:

"Yes, it is his uniform, Miss Annie; but he won't need any more, and so I took it. I think I can make good use of it."

"You are not—going to—to—put it on?" she stammered.

"Yes, indeed. Why not?"

"Why, it seems such—such a—terrible thing—to do."

"Oh, no, that is nothing, I assure you, Miss Annie. I am going to use it as a disguise while spying on the British, and it does not pay to be squeamish. It will be a big help to me, and I am glad to have the uniform."

"I suppose you would look at such things in a different light from the way it appears to me."

"Yes; but where are your parents, Annie?"

Father went over to New York early this morning, and mother is at the home of a neighbor. I look for her home at any moment."

"I will go upstairs, Miss Annie, and change my clothing for this uniform, if you have no objections."

"Of course I have none. I will keep watch, to see that no more redcoats get here without being seen."

"Thanks."

The youth went upstairs, and quickly doffed his own suit and donned the redcoat uniform.

Then he hung his suit up in a closet and came down stairs.

Mrs. Hargrave came home just as he came down, and greeted him pleasantly, and then thanked him heartily when she was told of the work he had done in protecting Annie.

"I am very, very much obliged to you, Mr. Slater," the woman said earnestly.

"You are more than welcome, Mrs. Hargrave," said Dick. "I was glad to be able to render your daughter assistance. I consider it my duty to do things of that kind whenever the opportunity comes to me."

He remained there for half an hour, and then, cautioning

the two to keep a sharp lookout for redcoats, and get in the house and close the doors if any came along, he took his departure, going in the direction of the British encampment.

"I don't know that I shall be able to learn anything of very great importance," thought Dick. "But with this uniform on I shall be able to get closer to the British without being in danger of being captured."

He moved slowly along, and of a sudden he came upon a party of four redcoats sitting around a flat-topped stump, playing cards.

CHAPTER VII.

ANOTHER CAPTURE.

"Hello, comrade," cried one; "been on a scouting expedition, have you?"

"Yes," replied Dick, quick to accept the suggestion.

"Found out anything?"

"No, nothing of importance."

"Well, there is nothing to do to-day, so join us in a game of cards."

"You say there is nothing to do?" remarked Dick.

The redcoats looked at him in some surprise.

"Yes; don't you know?" one remarked.

"No; I left the encampment before daylight, and don't know what was decided upon. I thought we were going to attack the rebels to-day."

The redcoats shook their heads.

"Nothing of the sort," said one.

"No?"

"No."

"Why are we not?"

"Why, the rebels are too strongly intrenched on the Heights, my man."

"They have a very strong position, true, but we have the stronger force."

"I know, but we would lose lots of good men if we were to try to storm the position."

"I suppose so."

"Yes; there's no doubt regarding it, and I think General Howe is wise in not attempting it."

"What is he going to do then?"

"He is going to besiege the Heights."

"So that is what he is going to do, eh?"

"Yes."

The "Liberty Boy" had his eyes open, and he thought he detected one of the four redcoats eyeing him searchingly.

"I wonder what it means?" the youth asked himself.

He was soon to learn.

Presently the redcoat spoke up, and asked:

"Who are you?"

"Me?" remarked Dick, as if surprised by the question.

"Yes."

"I am George Davis."

"George Davis, eh?"

"Yes."

"Well, how happens it, George Davis, that you are wearing Tom Fenton's uniform?"

The youth simulated surprise.

"I am not," he said.

"Yes you are."

"But I beg to say that you are wrong, sir."

"I know I am not. Two of the buttons on your coat, if you will notice, are different from the rest. I remember seeing Tom sew them on."

Dick saw that he was getting in a dangerous place. If the redcoats became suspicious they would attack him, and four to one was big odds.

"I tell you that you are mistaken," said Dick. "This is my uniform."

"Comrades," said the redcoat, "that is Tom Fenton's uniform, and I suggest that we make this fellow explain how he came to be wearing it."

The youth gave a look around him, and the redcoats noted this and leaped to their feet and drew their swords.

"Stand where you are," cried the one who had done most of the talking. "Don't be in a hurry to go."

"I don't see what is the matter with you fellows," said Dick. "What do you mean, anyway?"

"I'll tell you what I think," the redcoat said. "I think you are a rebel spy, and that in all probability you have murdered Tom and taken his uniform. I don't believe you are a British soldier at all."

Instantly Dick whirled and darted away.

The redcoats leaped forward and struck at him with their swords, but he was out of their reach.

Then they drew their pistols and fired at the fugitive.

One of the bullets went through the sleeve of Dick's coat, but did not inflict a wound.

"After him, boys," Dick heard one of the redcoats cry. "We must capture him."

"We'll see about that," thought Dick. "If you capture me you will be better men than I think you are."

The youth had great confidence in his abilities as a runner. He did not believe there was a redcoat in the British army that could catch him in an open field, and in the timber and underbrush he had a decided advantage.

The four redcoats gave chase energetically, however, yelling for Dick to stop; but of course he paid no attention.

The youth ran in the direction of Brooklyn Heights, of course, and this made his pursuers sure that they were right in thinking him a "rebel."

"I told you," panted the one who had accused Dick. "You see, he is headed straight for the rebel encampment on the Heights."

"Yes, you are right," from another.

"He's a rebel, all right," said a third; "and he's a runner, too."

"Yes, I don't believe we can catch him," said the fourth.

"We'll keep up the chase, anyway," said the first; "maybe some of our men will turn up and head him off for us."

Onward Dick ran, and after him came the redcoats. Dick saw that he could easily outrun them, and presently slackened his speed.

"I'd like to toll them close up to the Heights, and have some of our boys get in behind them and capture them," thought Dick.

He did not suppose he would have any such good luck as that, but made up his mind to toll the redcoats as close to the Heights as possible, anyway, and trust to luck for the rest.

The redcoats soon noticed that the fugitive was not going so fast, and they were deceived by it.

"He's giving out," cried one.

"Yes; maybe we can catch him, after all."

"We'll make a strong attempt, anyway."

"I believe we can overtake him now."

They increased their speed, somewhat, and began to draw up on the fugitive a little.

The "Liberty Boy" permitted this, and could not help smiling when he thought of how easily he could have run away and left the pursuers.

"I'll warrant they think they are going to overtake and capture me offhand," he said to himself.

Onward Dick ran, and after him came the redcoats.

At last he was almost to the foot of the ascent leading up to the Heights, and the redcoats were not more than thirty yards behind him.

The youth glanced back, and as he did so he saw a party of his "Liberty Boys" dart out from behind a clump of bushes and leap upon the redcoats.

There was a lively little combat there for a few moments, but the youths were too many for the redcoats, and the latter were quickly overpowered and made prisoners.

"Well, what do you think about it now?" asked Dick, as he looked smilingly in the face of the redcoat who had charged him with being a rebel.

"I think just what I did from the first: You are a scoundrelly rebel," was the bitter reply.

"Easy, easy, my redcoat friend," said Dick. "Just because I am a patriot is no reason I am a scoundrel. You shouldn't use such harsh terms in speaking of even an enemy."

"Bah!"

"Well, you trapped the redcoats nicely, Dick," said Bob Estabrook, with a grin. He was the leader of the party of "Liberty Boys."

"Yes. How did you boys happen to be on hand at just the right time, Bob?"

"We saw you having a footrace with the redcoats, Dick, and had an idea you would lead the redcoats as close up here as possible, and so we hastened down and stationed ourselves behind the bushes, to be in readiness to leap upon the pursuing party if it got this far."

"But how did you know it was me? I have on a British uniform."

"Oh, we'd know you if we saw you running, anywhere, Dick."

"Well, I'm glad of it, as it has enabled us to capture four of the enemy."

The prisoners were conducted up the ascent, and into the encampment on the Heights.

They were silent and sullen, and it was evident that they were not feeling very good-tempered.

The advent of the party of "Liberty Boys" with four redcoat soldiers prisoners in their midst created considerable excitement, and the patriot soldiers asked many questions of the boys as they walked toward the building used as headquarters.

As they approached the building General Putnam came forth, and he stared at the youths and their prisoners in surprise.

He did not recognize Dick in the British uniform till he was close up, and then the general uttered an exclamation.

"Hello, Dick, is it you?" he cried. "I didn't know you in your borrowed finery. What have you been up to?"

"We have captured four redcoats, general," said Dick. "What shall we do with them?"

"Take them to the guard-house, and put them in there to keep company with the seven you captured last night."

Dick turned to his comrades.

"You take the prisoners to the guard-house, boys," he said. "I have something to say to the general."

"All right, Dick," said Bob, and the youths moved away with the prisoners in their midst.

"What did you learn while away, Dick—anything?" asked the general.

"I know only what those four fellows told me," said Dick, motioning toward the disappearing prisoners.

"Ah, and what did they say?"

"They said that General Howe does not intend making an attack."

"They said that?"

"Yes."

"What is he going to do, then?"

"They said he was going to lay siege to the Heights, and force you to surrender."

"Ah, that's the scheme, is it?"

"According to the statement of the redcoats yonder."

"Do you think they knew what they were talking about, Dick?"

"I think so, sir."

"And you are sure they were not talking to mislead you?"

"I am. They said that before they suspected me of being other than a British soldier like themselves."

"I see. Well, I will tell the commander-in-chief when he gets here, and see what he—ah, there he is now."

General Washington had indeed arrived on the Heights, and was approaching the spot where Dick and the general stood.

He greeted the two pleasantly, and asked if there was any news.

"Dick, here, has been out on a scouting and spying expedition, general," said Putnam, "and he says that accord-

to the statements of the British soldiers no attempt will be made to storm our position."

"Ah, indeed? Then what is General Howe's plan, I wonder?"

"To lay siege to the Heights, and starve us into surrendering."

The commander-in-chief nodded his head.

"I suspected that would be the course of the British," he said. "I hardly expected that Howe would attack us when we had such a strong position."

"I wish he would do so," said Putnam. "We would make it a dear piece of business for him."

"Yes, and I think he is smart enough to understand that," said General Washington.

"What shall we do, general?" asked Putnam.

"We will keep quiet to-day, and see what the enemy does, General Putnam," was the reply. "It may be that the information we have is not to be relied on, and so we will wait and see what develops."

Dick, having performed his work and done his duty, went to the quarters occupied by the "Liberty Boys," and they wanted to know all about his adventures of the morning.

"How came you to be dressed in a British uniform and running from the four redcoats?" asked Bob.

"I'll tell you the whole story," said Dick; and he did so, the boys listening with eager interest.

"Say, Dick," said Dave Dunton, a bright, handsome young fellow, and a prime favorite among the boys, "is that Miss Annie Hargrave pretty?"

"Pretty, Dave?" remarked Dick. "Why, she is one of the most beautiful girls I have ever seen."

"That's right," coincided Bob: "and if I wasn't already in love with a certain nice girl I'd try to get this Miss Annie for a sweetheart."

"That's just what I am thinking of," said Dave gravely. "I have no sweetheart, and I think I'll go to this girl's home and see if I can persuade her to be my sweetheart. All soldiers must have sweethearts, you know."

The youths laughed and joked Dave, for they supposed he was merely talking to hear himself, but half an hour later he had disappeared, and no one knew what had become of him.

"I'll wager he has gone down to the Hargrave home to take a look at Miss Annie," said Bob Estabrook. "He's just that kind of a chap, and if he takes a notion to the girl she will have hard work getting rid of him."

CHAPTER VIII.

WONDERFUL WORK.

All day the patriot force on Brooklyn Heights held itself in readiness for action, and kept watch of the British.

The British did not seem to be stirring much, and it was

plain that no attempt was to be made to storm the Heights during that day.

The patriot generals held a council along toward evening. They wished to decide what should be done.

After quite a lengthy discussion it was decided to remain on the Heights, and see what the British would do.

A double line of sentinels were placed out that night, and a careful lookout was kept, but the British did not make an attack.

When morning came, however, and a look could be secured, it was seen that there was a stir in the enemy's camp.

"What are they going to do, I wonder?" asked General Putnam, as he and General Washington stood gazing down upon the British encampment.

"I hope they are going to storm the Heights, but I fear they are not," was the reply.

"Well, we will soon know."

The patriots watched the British closely, and it did not take long to discern what was going on.

"They are forming in a semi-circle around the Heights," said General Putnam.

"Yes," replied General Washington, "and that means that we must get away from here as quickly as possible, for if they should get in behind us with their warships, on East River, there would be no escape for us."

"You are right," agreed Putnam. "What are you going to do?"

"I'll tell you. I am going to send out trusty messengers, and gather all the boats possible, and have them assemble at the ferry after dark to-night, and then we will cross over to New York."

"That is a good plan," said Putnam.

This was done. A number of messengers were selected, Dick and Bob being among them, and they crossed over to New York and began the work of collecting the boats.

They seized upon every sloop, yacht, fishing-smack, scow, and rowboat that could be found, and by evening had a large number in readiness.

In Glover's Essex regiment were a lot of fishermen from Marblehead and Gloucester. They were experts with oar or sails, every one of them, and these were sent over in small parties, and placed in charge of the boats, with instructions to bring the vessels over to the Brooklyn ferry as soon as it was dark enough to veil their movements.

General Washington had kept an anxious eye out southward, down the East River, for he feared that at any moment the warships of the British might appear in sight, coming to cut off their retreat to New York. But the sun went down, and still no British vessels were in sight.

"I begin to think we shall succeed in making our escape, after all, general," he said to Putnam, and that grizzled veteran nodded his head and said he thought so.

As soon as it was dark the patriot soldiers began leaving the Heights and marching down to the ferry. Some of the boats were on hand, and these were quickly filled with soldiers, and moved away across the river, while other boats came up to the wharf to take the places left vacant.

The work was very skillfully conducted, and silently as well.

No talk was indulged in—at least none above a whisper—and no noise of any kind was made. The rowlocks had been greased, the oars were muffled.

A fleet of phantom vessels manned by phantom sailors could scarcely have made less noise, and as the work progressed, and there came no alarm from the British, the spirits of General Washington rose.

The great man was here, there, and everywhere, superintending the work, and giving whispered commands, and his great genius was apparent in it all.

All night long the work went on, and when the soldiers had been taken safely across, the cannon, extra arms of all kinds, ammunition, tools, and horses, and all the provisions as well, were taken over, and when the sun rose nothing at all was left in the works on Brooklyn Heights.

And the British had not suspected what was going on. This wonderful undertaking had been put through to a successful conclusion right under their very noses, and they had not suspected that anything unusual was in progress.

When the British had breakfasted, and gotten their eyes open, after their sound slumber of the night, they made ready to move closer to the Heights, so as to make their ranks compact, and prevent any of the "rebels" from slipping through at night. Orders had been sent by General Howe to his brother, Commodore Howe, to bring up a number of warships, and come in between the Heights and New York, and thus cut off the retreat of the "rebels."

There was something in the appearance of things on the top of Brooklyn Heights that did not look just right, however, and General Howe sent scouts out, to see what could be discovered.

An hour later one of the scouts came rushing to the British commander-in-chief, and gasped out:

"The rebels are not there, your excellency."

General Howe stared at the man as if he thought him crazy.

"What is that you say?" he gasped.

"I say the rebels are not on the Heights, sir."

"Not on the Heights?" The general's usually ruddy face paled, but he still looked at the man as if doubting his word.

"That is the truth, your excellency," said the scout. "I was up to the works, and there is not a soul there."

"Impossible!" gasped the officer.

"It is the truth, sir, impossible though it may seem."

Another scout came up at this moment, and substantiated his comrade's statement.

Wild with rage, and scarcely knowing what to think, General Howe gave the order for his force to advance on the Heights, and they hastened to obey the order.

Twenty minutes later the entire British force was in the works on the Heights, staring about them with wondering eyes.

There was nothing left but the bare works; the patriots

in getting away had overlooked nothing, and had made clean sweep.

"Well, this beats anything I ever heard of," gasped General Howe, as he gazed about him. "What do you think of it, gentlemen?" turning to his officers, who were standing near.

"Well, the rebels have performed a feat that I would have deemed an impossibility," replied one.

"You are right," from another. "It certainly is the most wonderful thing that has ever come under my observation."

"How did they manage to get away?" asked Howe.

"They must have got a lot of boats together and got across in them," replied one.

"But how did they manage to do that without making noise that would be heard by my sentinels?"

The officers shook their heads.

"You will have to ask the rebels themselves that question," replied one. "It is too much for me."

Meanwhile, among the patriots, over in New York, there was great rejoicing.

The soldiers were delighted, and the officers congratulated one another on the success of the affair.

"I imagine there will be surprise on the part of the British when they find us gone," said General Putnam.

"And anger as well," from another officer.

"They will feel greatly chagrined, without doubt," said the commander-in-chief, with a smile. "Well, now that we have abandoned Brooklyn Heights, there is no longer a need of leaving General Prescott and his force in their exposed position on Governor's Island, so I shall send boats to bring them away at once."

This was done, and before noon Prescott's force was in the city.

Of course Dick Slater and his "Liberty Boys" were delighted by the success of the retreat from the Heights. Next to a battle with the redcoats they could enjoy playing such a fine trick on the enemy.

"I wonder if we can hold the city now that we are here," remarked Bob.

"That is the question," replied Dick. "Well, we will try to help to hold it, at any rate."

"So we will."

"I was sorry we had to leave Brooklyn Heights, though," said Dave Dunton, soberly.

"Why so?" asked Bob.

"Because it makes it next to impossible for me to get to see my sweetheart, Annie."

The "Liberty Boys" stared at the speaker, and then Bob exclaimed:

"Dave, you rascal, did you go to the Hargrave home yesterday, when you were away from the Heights for nearly three hours?"

"I did," with a grin.

"Did you see Annie Hargrave?" asked Dick.

"I did, Dick," was the calm reply.

"Well, what do you think of her?"

"I think she is the prettiest, sweetest girl that ever I have seen, Dick."

There was no mistaking the youth's earnestness, and Bob slapped him on the back and said:

"You're hard hit, my boy! You're hard hit!"

"You are right, Bob; I acknowledge the fact," was the reply.

"And what about the girl?" asked Dick. "Did she seem to take a fancy to you?"

"I don't know, but I hope so. Now, however, we are so far away from her home that I fear I shall not be able to make much progress, as I can't get to her home."

"Oh, well, you can hunt her up when the war is over, and renew your acquaintanceship," said Bob.

"Oh, blazes! she'd forget there ever was such a fellow as Dave Dunton in that time," said the youth gloomily.

"Oh, well, you will be able to go over and see her, Dave," said Bob, patting him on the back. "I'll go with you if you're afraid to go alone, old man."

"Oh, I'm not afraid, and I'll go if I have to fight my way through the British army to get there."

"That settles it," said Bob, gravely. "He is head over ears in love with the girl, I know, for that's just the way I feel about my sweetheart."

That evening Dick received a summons to appear before General Washington at Fraunce's Tavern, corner of Pearl and Broad streets, which was used as headquarters by the officers.

He went at once.

"Dick," the great man said. "I have some work for you."

"I am glad of it, sir."

"I knew you would be," with a smile "You and your Liberty Boys are always ready and eager for work."

"What is it you wish me to do, sir?"

"I wish you to do some more spy-work, Dick."

"Very good, sir."

"It will be a dangerous undertaking, Dick, but I want that you shall cross the East River and try to find out what the British intend doing."

"I'll do the best I can, your excellency."

"I am sure of that. You see, Dick, we have done well in escaping from the British when they might have hemmed us in over on the Heights, and I do not wish to let them get even with us by playing some trick in return. If they are going to try to do anything, I wish to know what it is, in advance, and then we will be enabled to foil their plans."

"If I can learn what they intend doing, I will do so, sir."

"Very good. You may go now. Do what you please, and work in your own way. All I care for is that you secure the information."

"Very good, sir," and then, saluting, Dick took his departure.

"When he returned to the quarters occupied by the "Liberty Boys," and told that he was going over onto the Long Island side of the river on a spying expedition, Dave Dunton leaped up, eagerly, and cried:

"Say, Dick, I'm going with you. It'll be a splendid chance for me to go and see Annie Hargrave."

"Well, you may go, if you wish, Dave," said Dick. "I sympathize with you, and am willing to help you all I can."

"Much obliged, Dick," in a grateful voice.

"Say, let me go with you, Dick," said Bob.

"No, I think I had better not take anyone else with me, Bob," with a shake of the head. "I wouldn't let Dave go if it wasn't for his having a sweetheart over there."

"Jove, I wish I had a sweetheart over there, then," said Bob.

"You see, Dave and I will separate as soon as we get across the river. He will go to the Hargrave home, while I will make for the Heights."

"I know. Well, you want to be careful, both of you," said Bob.

"Oh, we'll be careful, you may be sure of that."

"You had better let half a dozen of us go over and stay in a boat down by the ferry, Dick," said Bob; "then if you get into trouble, and want to get away in a hurry, you will be able to do so."

After some thought Dick told Bob that this was not a bad idea.

"You may do that if you like," he said; and Bob and five of the youths got ready to accompany Dick and Dave.

Ten minutes later they made their way along the street, and soon reached the river front.

They found a boat, and getting in, pushed off.

The youths were expert oarsmen, and rowed swiftly, but silently across the river.

It was so dark that they did not much fear being discovered, and ten minutes later they reached the Long Island shore, and Dick and Dave got out.

"We'll wait right here for you," whispered Bob.

"All right."

"How long do you think you'll be gone?"

"I don't know, Bob."

"Well, we'll stay right here till you do come."

"Good. Do so."

"We will, but I don't know whether we can make that kind of a promise to Dave or not, for when a fellow is with his sweetheart he keeps no account of the flight of time."

"Oh, I won't stay a great while, Bob," replied Dave.

CHAPTER IX.

DISCOVERED.

The two youths moved away, and parted after they had gone perhaps fifty yards, Dave turning to the right, and Dick going straight ahead.

Dick made his way slowly and cautiously up the slope leading to Brooklyn Heights.

He knew that he was taking his life in his hands in venturing up the hill, but he was daring, and had made up his mind to learn something regarding the plans of the British if such a thing was possible.

Dick had donned the suit of scarlet before starting out, and in this respect he was well equipped. In the darkness it would be a difficult matter for any redcoat to discover that he was not a comrade.

Getting into the encampment was the difficulty, however. There were sentinels, and it would be a hard matter to get past them.

The youth was an expert at this kind of work, however, and thought he would be able to succeed.

He crept cautiously up the side of the slope, and presently was close to the top.

Here he paused and listened.

Soon he heard the measured tread of the sentinel.

Closer and closer the footsteps sounded, and then the youth saw the form of the sentinel outlined against the horizon.

Dick waited till the sentinel had passed on, and then stole forward, and leaping over the embankment, was within the works.

Of course, having but recently been in the works, when the patriot army was there; Dick knew the ground thoroughly.

This was of great assistance to him, and he moved about in quite a confident manner.

He moved here and there, among the soldiers, and acted so cool, selfpossessed, and so entirely at home that he attracted no attention.

Wherever there was a group of soldiers talking, Dick paused and listened, hoping to hear something that would give him a knowledge of the intended movements of the British.

He heard some things that were of interest, and learned that it had not yet been decided what should be done; from some of the talk indulged in, however, Dick decided that the matter of crossing the river and capturing New York city was being considered.

"That is what General Washington thinks they are likely to do, I am confident," thought Dick.

He made his way gradually in the direction of the building that had been used as headquarters by the patriot officers, as he felt confident it would be used by the British officers as well.

The "Liberty Boy" had been in this building many times, and knew the interior arrangements perfectly. If he could get into the house he would be able to make his way about without trouble.

There was a rear door, and toward this Dick made his way.

When he reached the door he found it fastened.

Then he tried a window, and succeeded in raising it.

He stood still, and listened for almost a minute.

He could hear no sound to indicate the presence of anyone within the room that he was about to enter.

Of a sudden, however, he heard footsteps near at hand and realized that some one was coming.

He quickly stepped through the opening, and pushed the window down.

The youth knew just where he was, and although it was dark within the room, he had no difficulty in moving across the floor, to the door leading into the hall.

Opening this door he passed out and moved along the hall.

The hall was dark, but toward the farther end a light streamed across it, coming seemingly from underneath a door on the right-hand side.

This room, as Dick knew, had been used as the private office by General Washington, and the youth believed would be so used by the British officers.

As the youth drew near the door he heard the faint murmur of voices.

The sound came from the room from which the light streamed.

"The British officers are in there," thought Dick, "and it may be that they are discussing what they shall do. If so I may learn something of interest and value."

He was soon at the door, and pausing, listened intently. He could hear very plainly by placing his ear to the keyhole.

As he had thought might be the case, and had hoped might be, the British officers were discussing the matter of trying to capture New York.

General Howe and all his officers were in the room, and it seemed to be the consensus of opinion that the city could be captured.

The youth listened perhaps fifteen minutes, and then he heard the front door open, and some one enter.

Fearing that he would be discovered, Dick left his position and stole back down the hall.

He heard the newcomer knock on the door, which was speedily opened.

The youth paused at the doorway leading into the kitchen, and listened.

The newcomer was a British soldier, and he said:

"General Howe, it is reported around the camp that there is a rebel spy within our lines!"

"Great Guns!" thought Dick. "I guess that means me."

"Say you so?" the youth heard in General Howe's voice.

"Yes, your excellency. What is your wish in the matter?"

"Place a triple line of sentinels at once, so as to guard against his getting out of the encampment, and then make a thorough search for him."

"Yes, your excellency. It shall be done."

"And when you have found him bring him here."

"Yes, your excellency."

"Hasten."

"Yes, your excellency."

The man hastened away at once.

As for Dick, he realized that he must get away from here in a hurry.

"I must try to get through the lines before the sentinels are stationed," he thought. "If I don't it will be difficult for me to get out, and when they go to making thorough search the chances are that they will soon discover that I am not what I seem."

The "Liberty Boy" got out of the house the same way he had got in, and was soon stealing along in the shadows of the small buildings.

Presently there were no more buildings to cast shadows, and then Dick sauntered out, and mingled with the soldiers. He could see that on every hand was excitement. Soldiers were hurrying hither and thither, and there was a babel of tongues.

"What's the trouble?" asked Dick, addressing a quiet-looking soldier.

"Rebel spy in camp," was the reply.

"You don't say."

"Yes."

"How do they know this?"

"A Tory was down at the river, and saw a boat come over from New York. There were four in the boat, but two got out and came in this direction a ways, when one turned aside, and went off toward the south; the other came straight up the slope toward our encampment. He says he is sure the fellow entered the camp, and that he is a rebel spy."

"Surely he wouldn't do that. He would be seen, and would be seized at once."

"No."

"No?"

"No; you see, he has a British uniform on, and would not be noticed."

"Ah, I see."

A sudden thought seemed to strike the redcoat, and he turned and gazed keenly at Dick.

"You seem to be rather inquisitive," he said.

"Oh, I just wished to know what is going on."

"You ought to have known without having to answer me, for it has been current news in the camp for fifteen minutes."

"I have been out on a little scouting expedition, and have just got in."

"Oh, that's it?"

The youth thought he detected suspicion and unbelief in the man's voice.

"That's it," he replied, quietly, and turned to walk away, only to find himself seized by the shoulder.

"Hold on, my friend, don't be in such a hurry," the soldier said grimly. "You asked me a number of questions, now let me ask you a few."

"Why, I have no objections," said Dick, quietly.

"Oh, you haven't?"

"Of course not."

"Very well. What company do you belong to?"

"Company I, of the Twelfth regiment."

"Humph. What is your captain's name?"

"Knox."

"You lie," cried the redcoat. "There is no such captain in our army, and the captain of the company you mention is named Morgan."

Crack!

The "Liberty Boy" had jerked loose from the other's grasp and dealt him a blow fair between the eyes, knocking him down.

A wild yell went up from the man's lips, however, and this attracted attention instantly.

The fallen man was not rendered senseless by the blow, and he instantly cried out:

"The spy! The spy!"

Dick knew it would not do to stay and try to deceive the redcoats into believing he was a British soldier. The fact that he had struck the redcoat would be sufficient to prove that he was not a redcoat.

So he leaped away with the speed of a startled deer.

This action on his part attracted attention directly to him, of course, and cries went up on every hand.

"The spy!"

"Stop him!"

"Seize him!"

"Don't let him get away!"

Soldiers ran to intercept him; others leaped forward and tried to seize him.

Things certainly looked bad for the brave "Liberty Boy."

He did not pause or falter, however. He knew it was do or die.

If he was captured his life would undoubtedly pay the forfeit.

The youth knocked down three or four soldiers who had attempted to seize him, and then found half a dozen more confronting him.

He leaped right at them, and in another instant was engaged in a furious hand-to-hand encounter with them.

The redcoats had never been handled so roughly in all their lives as this youth handled them.

He moved about so swiftly, leaping here and there, and ducking and dodging, that they could not seize hold of him, and he struck out straight and sure, and soon had the six of them piled upon the ground.

Then Dick bounded onward, just as a fresh lot of redcoats were on the point of leaping upon him.

As for that, the entire encampment was gathering at this spot, and if the youth did not get away quickly he would not get away at all.

The redcoats were afraid to fire at the youth for fear of hitting some of their own men, and on this account Dick was reasonably safe so far as that was concerned.

He bounded away, and reaching the earthworks, leaped over.

He was now where it would be safe to fire upon him, and as he leaped over the earthworks a score of muskets cracked, and the bullets whistled over the youth's head.

"That was a close call," thought Dick, and he bounded down the slope at the top of his speed.

Soon the top of the earthworks was thick with redcoats, and they fired a volley down the slope in the direction taken by the fugitive.

The youth, anticipating some such move on their part, had taken refuge behind a large tree, and the bullets rattled all around him.

"They would have downed me but for the tree," he said to himself. "Well, I must get away from here now, and in a hurry at that."

Then he bounded onward down the slope, and he heard the crackling of underbrush behind him, which proved that he was being pursued.

"Well, if they don't bring me down with an accidental shot, I will be able to escape," the "Liberty Boy" said to himself.

Onward he dashed.

Presently he reached the foot of the slope, and struck the level country.

Then he headed in the direction of the Hargrave farmhouse, and ran faster than ever.

Presently he paused and listened.

He could hear no sound of pursuit.

"I guess they've given it up as a bad job," he told himself. "Well, I'll go on to Mr. Hargrave's, and see if Dave is ready to go back to New York."

CHAPTER X.

ANOTHER CAPTURE.

The "Liberty Boy" hastened onward, and twenty minutes later arrived at the farmhouse.

Mr. Hargrave admitted Dick, and greeted him warmly.

"I am very, very glad to see you," he said. "Your comrade, Dave Dunton, said he thought it possible you might come here, and I'm glad you have done so."

"Thank you," said Dick. "I am glad to see you again, and how are you, Mrs. Hargrave?" as the lady shook hands with him.

"I am well, Mr. Slater," was the reply. "But I am living in constant fear these days, for one hardly knows what to expect of the redcoats."

"True," agreed Dick. "Still, I hardly think they will do you serious injury."

Then he shook hands with Annie, who blushed, for she was a bright girl, and well knew that Dick knew why Dave was coming there. Still she was very happy, for she had learned to love Dave, who was a handsome, manly youth.

"How are you and my comrade getting along, Miss Annie?" Dick asked mischievously.

"Oh, first rate, I guess, Mr. Slater," was the reply, with another blush.

"Mr. Slater, eh?" laughed Dick. "You used to call me

Dick, Miss Annie. How is it? Is Dave jealous, and you afraid to address me by my given name?"

"No; that isn't it at all."

"Of course not," laughed Dave. "Why should I be jealous of you, Dick? Why, Annie, he has a sweetheart up at Westchester county, and if he was to make love to another girl, there would be trouble, and no mistake."

Dick laughed, and then turned to Mr. and Mrs. Hargrave, and engaged them in conversation.

"Dave says you went on a spying expedition to the campment of the British, Mr. Slater," said Mr. Hargrave. "Did you have good success?"

"Only fair success, sir. My presence was discovered, and I was forced to flee for my life."

"Ah! And were you pursued?"

"Yes, a ways, at least."

"Is there any danger that they will be able to track you here, Dick?" asked Dave.

"I hardly think so. But still, it might be well for us to go pretty soon. It would be bad for the folks here, if we were to be found in their home."

"That's so. I think we had better go."

It was plain that Dave did not wish to run the risk of getting his sweetheart into danger.

So the two bade the folks good-by, and took their departure.

They paused at the edge of the timber, a few yards distant from the house, at Dave's suggestion.

"Let's wait here awhile, Dick," he said; "some of the redcoats might come, and then we will be on hand to—protect—"

"Miss Annie," finished Dick, nudging his companion mischievously.

"Well, yes, if you will have it that way, Dick. You know how that is yourself. Just imagine this was the home of Alice Estabrook, your sweetheart, and that she was in the place of Annie, wouldn't you want to stay awhile, and be ready to protect her?"

"I most certainly would, Dave," was the earnest reply. "I was just joking, Dave, and we will stay here as long as you wish."

"Thank you, old man."

"No thanks are necessary, my boy."

The two had been there not more than ten minutes before they heard footsteps and the crackling of underbrush, and a party of about half a dozen men passed within ten yards of them, and went on to the house.

"There they are, sure enough," whispered Dave, his voice quivering with excitement.

"You are right, Dave. It is perhaps a good thing that we remained."

"Yes, indeed."

"We will wait and see whether or not they act meanly," said Dick. "If they do not, perhaps it will be as well for us to not interfere with them, but if they go to threatening the folks yonder, we will give the scoundrels a good thrashing."

The redcoats were now at the front of the house, and one knocked on the door.

Presently it was opened by Mr. Hargrave, who asked what was wanted.

"We have come to see if there is a rebel here, sir," said the leader of the party.

"There is no rebel here," Mr. Hargrave said.

"Of course you would say so," in a sneering voice.

"I say so because it is so."

"Then you will have no objection to our searching the house, I suppose."

"Certainly not."

"Very well; we will do so, then. Come along, boys."

Mr. Hargrave stepped aside, and the redcoats filed into the house.

"Why should you get the idea that there was a rebel here?" Mr. Hargrave asked.

"Because there was a rebel spy in our encampment an hour ago, and he made his escape. The last that was seen or heard of him he was headed this way, and we thought he might have taken refuge in your house."

"No; we have seen no one this evening."

"We will search the house and see for ourselves nevertheless."

"Very well. I will go with you."

Mr. Hargrave took up a candle, and went on:

"Where will you look first?"

"On this floor."

All the rooms on the ground floor were searched, and then three of the redcoats took a candle and went to the cellar, while the other three, led by Mr. Hargrave, went upstairs.

Thorough search was made both in the cellar and in the rooms on the second floor, but of course no sign of the person the redcoats were looking for was found.

The redcoats in the cellar made a discovery, however, and one that filled them with delight. They found a barrel of hard cider, and lost no time in sampling it.

As soon as the three came down from upstairs they were called to by those in the cellar, and hastened down, equally eager to do some sampling.

Mr. Hargrave remained in the sitting-room, where his wife and daughter were.

There was a troubled look on his face.

"They will get drunk on the hard cider," he told his wife and daughter. "And I am afraid that when in that condition they will be capable of almost any meanness."

"Perhaps they will drink themselves into a helpless state," said his wife, hopefully.

"Perhaps so. I hope so, but I am afraid they will not. I think you and Annie had better go upstairs, and if they come up out of the cellar and ask where you are I will say you have gone to bed."

"I think the best thing for us to do will be to go out of doors, and hide nearby, till the redcoats are gone, father," said Annie. "We will be safer, then, than if we remain in the house."

"That's so; that is a good idea," her father said. "Come along."

"No; you stay here; we can get along, father," said Annie.

The woman and girl left the house, and walked toward the timber, but had gone only a little ways when they heard a familiar voice say cautiously:

"Sh! don't be frightened, Mrs. Hargrave and Annie; it is Dave and I."

"Mr. Slater!" exclaimed the woman.

"And Dave!" exclaimed the girl, and then she blushed, but the darkness concealed this from the eyes of the others.

"We heard the redcoats coming, and remained so as to be on hand to protect you in case you needed protection," explained Dick.

"Oh, I am so glad!" Mrs. Hargrave murmured.

"Where are the redcoats now?"

"They are down in the cellar."

"Searching for me?"

"No, getting drunk on hard cider."

"So that is what they are doing?" remarked Dick. "And why did you leave the house?"

"We were afraid they might act mean when they became intoxicated, and so we came out, and were going to hide in the edge of the timber till the redcoats were gone."

"I see."

"What shall we do, Dick?"

"I hardly know, Dave; perhaps it will be as well to let the fellows go away if they go quietly."

"But they won't be likely to do that if they become drunk."

"They are likely to be mean, that's a fact. Well, we will remain, and if they do get mean we will go for them and make them wish they had gone away and attended to their business."

"So we will."

The woman and girl remained with Dick and Dave, and while Dick conversed with Mrs. Hargrave, Dave and Annie had considerable to say to each other—and they said it in such faint whispers that even Dick and Annie's mother could not hear what was said.

It was necessary that talk should be pitched in a very cautious key, on account of the proximity of the redcoats, of course.

Had the moon suddenly shone forth from behind the clouds and flooded the scene with light, it would have been slightly disconcerting to Dave and Annie, for the youth's arm was around the girl's waist. Young lovers may safely be counted upon to take prompt advantage of every possible opportunity for such performances.

Presently Dick made his way to the door, and looked in. Mr. Hargrave was sitting down, taking things as easy as possible, though the sound of loud talk, mingled with which was much boisterous laughter was anything but reassuring.

"Those redcoats are getting worked up to a pitch that will make them capable of almost anything," thought Dick.

Being confident that the men in the cellar would not come upstairs right away, Dick entered the room, and explained matters to Mr. Hargrave, who was glad to know that Dick and Dave were on hand.

"I hope that I shall have no trouble with them," he said. "But if I do I shall not worry, as we three sober men ought to be able to get the better of them, drunk as they are."

Shuffling footsteps were heard on the stairs at this moment, and Dick glided out of the room.

The redcoats had all the hard cider they could drink, and came up into the sitting-room, talking and laughing boisterously.

"Where's the women folks?" asked the leader of the party, swaying unsteadily.

"They have gone upstairs," was the command.

"But they have gone to bed, sir," the man protested.

"No matter; had no business to go to bed so early. Tell 'em to come down."

"Really, sir, I must object to doing so," Mr. Hargrave said.

"Then we'll make 'em come down ourselves. Come on, boys," and seizing a candle, the fellow led the way, the other five following, and they staggered upstairs.

Of course, they found nobody, and presently they were heard coming down. They were talking loudly, and threats were intermingled with the talk.

Knowing that the redcoats would be angry when they came down, Mr. Hargrave had summoned Dick and Dave, and the three stood near the door leading into the room from the hall in which was the stairway. Each man held a pistol in his hand, but held it by the muzzle, instead of by the butt. The intention was to rap the redcoats over the head, one after the other, as they came through the doorway.

Presently the leader came staggering through the doorway.

"Where's the scoundrel that lied to us?" he cried. "Where's the——"

He got no further, for Dick rapped him over the head with the butt of his pistol, and dropped him senseless to the floor.

The redcoats were strung out sufficiently so as to make it easy for the three to work the scheme, and it was no trouble at all to down the drunken soldiers as they came staggering through the doorway.

The result was that in a very few minutes the redcoats were prisoners, their hands being tied together behind their backs.

Water was thrown in the faces of the redcoats, and they soon recovered their senses.

Their rough experience had sobered them somewhat, and they stared at the two youths in amazement.

"You are the spies we were in search of," cried the leader, angrily. "I'll wager a month's pay that that is the case."

"And what if we are?" asked Dick suavely. "What are you going to do about it?"

"Nothing, I guess," was the reply. "You have us in your power. And now, what are you going to do with us?"

"We are going to take you across the river."

"To New York?"

"Yes."

"You had better let us go."

"Oh, no."

"You will never get us there."

"Why not?"

"Some of our comrades will rescue us, and capture you."

"We are not afraid. We will gag you so you can't come out, and will have very little trouble in getting you over the city."

The youths gagged the redcoats, and then bidding good-bye to Mrs. Hargrave and Annie, and accompanied by Mr. Hargrave, set out for the river with their prisoners. They soon located the boat in which were Bob and his comrades, and putting the prisoners in the boat, got in, bade good-bye to Mr. Hargrave, and were soon moving across the river.

CHAPTER XI.

IN THE ENEMY'S CAMP.

Next morning Dick went to headquarters, to report to General Washington.

"Well, what did you learn, Dick?" the great man asked after he had greeted Dick.

"I learned that there is a plan on foot for capturing New York, your excellency," said Dick.

"I suspected as much, my boy; tell me all you know about it."

The youth did so, the general listening with interest.

"Well," he said, when Dick had finished, "we will just have to keep our eyes open and watch the redcoats like hawks. We must be ready to checkmate any move they may attempt to make."

"True, sir; do you think they can take the city?"

"I rather fear so, Dick."

"You will hold it as long as possible, however?"

"That depends, Dick. It may turn out to be more advisable to simply evacuate the city, and let them take possession unopposed. They have a much stronger force than ours, and have besides, the assistance of the fleet, which can ascend the rivers on both sides of us, and bombard us as we try to stay."

"Well, I hope you will hold it, sir."

The great general smiled.

"You and your 'Liberty Boys' are always eager for a fight, Dick," he said. "I am glad of it, but it is sometimes better policy not to fight, but to wait for a more favorable opportunity."

"True, sir," said Dick.

"By the way, I was informed while breakfasting that you brought some prisoners over last night, Dick."

The youth bowed.

"Yes, your excellency. We captured six redcoats, who are bothering a patriot family, and brought them over."

"Good! Every British soldier we capture makes the enemy's force just that much weaker, and the more we get the redcoats the better."

The two talked awhile longer, and Dick was on the point of taking his departure, when of a sudden an exclamation escaped the lips of General Washington.

"What is it, sir?" asked Dick.

The great man struck himself on the head with his clenched hand, as if thoroughly vexed.

"I have just thought of something, Dick," he said. "I have committed a grave error, have done something which may result disastrously, indeed."

"What is it, sir?"

"This, Dick. When we evacuated the works on Brooklyn Heights I forgot to remove some papers from the desk in the room I used for my private office!"

"You left some papers there?"

"Yes, Dick, and important papers, at that."

"That is too bad."

"Indeed it is. If they have fallen into the hands of the British it will be bad, for they were papers of great importance."

General Washington leaped to his feet and paced the floor.

"Is there any possibility that the British may not find the papers?" Dick asked.

"Yes, there is a possibility, but scarcely a probability, Dick. I fear they have found the papers, or will do so. Oh, why did I forget them? What shall I do? What all I do?"

The "Liberty Boy" had never before seen the great man agitated.

"The papers must be of great value, indeed," he thought. "Love, I wish I could get them for him."

Then he started, and an eager light came into his eyes.

Why could he not at least try to secure the valuable papers? He had ventured into the British encampment before, why not do it again?

He waited a few moments, and then addressed the general.

"I have thought of something, your excellency," he said.

"What, Dick?" without pausing in the rapid pacing backward and forward across the room.

"Why not let me make the attempt to secure the papers?"

General Washington paused suddenly, and whirling, looked at the youth. He stared at Dick for a few moments silently, and then said:

"Do you think there is the least chance for you to do such a thing, Dick?" he asked.

The youth hesitated.

"Well, I can hardly say as regards that, sir," he replied; "there may be a chance that I could do it, and perhaps it

would be an utter impossibility, but I am willing to make the attempt, if you say for me to do so."

"I would not like to say for you to do so, Dick, for it would be such a daring thing to do, and so dangerous that I would not like to expose you to the danger of being captured."

"You need not hesitate on my account, your excellency," said Dick, quietly. "I shall be glad to make the attempt to secure the papers, and will do so if you wish. It may be that I shall fail, but I will succeed, if possible."

"I know that, Dick; but you must take into consideration the terrible danger. First you must penetrate into the British encampment; then you would have to enter the house used as headquarters. Even then your work would be only begun, for the most difficult thing of all would be to enter the room and see if the papers were to be found, for there would almost surely be one or more officers in the room nearly all the time."

"True, sir; but I will make the attempt gladly, and if I should succeed, it will be well; if I fail it cannot be helped."

General Washington took a step forward, and seizing Dick's hand, pressed it warmly.

"Dick," he said, "if you can by any stroke of good work and good fortune combined secure those papers, you will be doing not only me, but the patriot cause the greatest service imaginable. I shall let you make the attempt, my boy, but would not do so, were it not that the papers are of such great importance. I only hope and pray that you may succeed, and that you may not lose your life in making the attempt!"

"Then it is settled, sir? I am to make the attempt to secure the papers?" asked Dick eagerly.

"Yes, my boy."

"Thank you, sir, for letting me do so. I shall be delighted to try to secure the papers, and will do so if such a thing is possible."

"I am sure of that, Dick."

"And now, tell me where you left the papers, your excellency."

"They were left in a small drawer at the right-hand side of the old walnut desk that I used—you saw it, did you not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Good; then you know right where to look for the papers."

"Yes, sir, and if the redcoats haven't already found them, I believe I shall be able to secure them."

"Well, be very careful, Dick; don't risk your life too recklessly, as I would rather lose the papers, important though they are, than to have you lose your life."

"I'll be careful, sir."

"I suppose you will wait till night before making the attempt, Dick?"

"Yes; it would not be possible to enter the British lines in the daytime."

After some further talk, Dick saluted and withdrew.

He returned to the quarters occupied by the "Liberty Boys," and told them what he intended trying to do.

They were eager and excited, and many shook their heads dubiously.

"It will be as much as your life is worth to attempt such a dangerous thing, Dick."

"You will be captured, sure!"

"And capture means death!"

"You are foolish to take such a terrible risk, Dick!"

Such were a few of the remarks indulged in by the "Liberty Boys."

But Dick simply smiled.

"I have been in the British lines before, boys," he said, "and am here, alive and well."

"True; but you came near getting nabbed the last time," said Mark Morrison.

"But they didn't get me, and a miss is as good as a mile."

"Next time you may not be so fortunate."

"Well, I am going to make the attempt, at any rate, and I have considerable hope of being able to secure the papers."

"Say, Dick, you must not go alone," said Bob. "I am going to go with you."

"But I fear two would be more likely to be discovered than one, Bob."

"I don't think so. I have a British uniform, and dressed up as redcoats the two of us will not be noticed any more quickly than would be the case with one."

"Perhaps not."

"Then I'm to go!" cried Bob, eagerly.

"Yes," said Dick, after a few moments of thought. "You go."

"And you will want that some more of us shall go along, and remain in the boat, like we did last night, won't you, Dick?" asked Mark Morrison.

"Yes, Mark."

"All right."

The day passed away in due time, and then Dick and Bob arrayed themselves in the British uniforms, and accompanied by four more "Liberty Boys," went down to the East River, got in a boat, and rowed across, making a landing a quarter of a mile below the ferryboat wharf.

Dick and Bob got out, bade their comrades good-by in cautious whispers, and then moved away through the darkness.

The two stole up the slope leading to the Heights, and moved as silently as two shadows.

They were experts at this kind of business, and were soon close up to the earthworks.

Here they paused, to await the approach of the sentinel.

Soon they heard his footsteps, and saw his body outlined against the sky.

They waited till the sentinel had passed, and then they stole forward, reached the earthworks, stepped over, and walked calmly and quietly forward, acting as if they were perfectly at home.

Their very boldness of demeanor was their best safeguard. Other men whom they passed glanced at them but there was nothing in the actions of the two to excite suspicion that they were not British soldiers, and so no particular attention was paid to them.

Of course they were careful not to get close to any of the camp-fires, as Dick feared that his face might be recognized.

They worked their way toward the building occupied by the officers as headquarters, and presently were enabled to slip in behind the building. They did not think they had been seen, but stood beside the house and waited and listened for several minutes before making any further move.

Hearing nothing to arouse their fears, they got to work.

They tried the door, and found it fastened. Then Dick tried the window, and to his surprise, and delight as was found it unfastened.

He pushed the window up, and held it while Bob climbed softly through, into the room.

Then Dick followed, and the window was lowered, slowly and cautiously, for it would not have done to make noise.

When the window had been lowered, the two daring "Liberty Boys" stood perfectly still, and listened for more than a minute.

They were on the point of starting ahead, with a view to making their way to the room occupied by the officers, when they heard footsteps in the hall.

Some one was coming!

The two stood still, and waited, however, for they were sure the person would enter the kitchen, which was across the hall from the room they were in.

It turned out as they expected; the person did enter the kitchen.

They listened intently, and were able to determine the sound of the footsteps that the person had gone down into the cellar.

"For wine for the officers, likely," whispered Bob.

"I have an idea that you are right, Bob," replied Dick, and then a thought struck him.

He had brought along some sleeping powders, and if by any means these powders could be gotten into the wine the officers were to drink, then the task of entering the room where they were would be simplified.

"Come, Bob," whispered Dick.

They moved across the room, opened the door leading into the hall, crossed the hall, and entered the kitchen.

The door leading to the cellar was open, and a faint light came streaming up from below.

The youths took up their position at a point where they would be behind the man's back as he came up out of the cellar; this would enable them to take him by surprise, and they would have no difficulty in making a prisoner of him if such a course was decided to be necessary.

Presently they heard the footsteps of the man. He was approaching the steps leading up into the kitchen, and the light grew brighter and brighter as he came closer.

when the youths heard the man's steps on the stairs, and his head came in view.

They crouched low, and waited, ready to pounce upon the fellow when he should be in the kitchen.

But suddenly they exchanged glances. The man was speaking to himself, but speaking aloud, as is the fashion of some men.

"I hate that fat old scoundrel Howe!" the fellow said. "He treats me like I was a dog, and I don't like it. I'd like to do something to get even with him, that's what I would. I'd do it, too, if I had a chance."

"Would you, really and truly?" asked Dick, and he and Bob stepped forward and confronted the man, who started back, and came within an ace of dropping the bottles of wine he was carrying.

"Yes, I would," the man said, doggedly; "and now, what are you goin' to do about it? I s'pose you'll go an' tell him what I have said?"

"No," said Dick. "We don't like General Howe, either, but we will help you get even with him, and will be getting even with him ourselves at the same time."

"All right. How are we goin' to do it?"

"That wine is for him?" asked Dick.

"Yes, for him an' the other officers that are in there."

"Very well. I have here some powders that will make a man sick at his stomach, but will not injure him permanently. Let us put the powders in the wine; it will make the officers sick, and they will never know what caused their sickness, while we will be revenged on them. What do you say?"

"All right; I'm agreeable," said the servant.

CHAPTER XII.

DICK AND BOB SECURE THE PAPERS.

This was good fortune, indeed.

The youths could not have asked for anything more to their liking than this.

Of course the servant thought they were British soldiers, the same as himself, or he would not have agreed to the plan suggested.

He did not suspect that the two were "rebel" spies, and that they had a purpose in being there.

He quickly extracted the corks from the necks of the bottles, and Dick put two powders in each of the bottles. This done, the corks were put back, and Dick said:

"Now, go ahead and let them drink all they want to. It will make them good and sick, and that is what we want."

"It will be some satisfaction to see them sick," said the servant, and then he left the kitchen, and went to the room where the officers were.

"Say, what a great stroke of luck that was, Dick!" said Bob, rubbing his hands in delight.

"You are right, Bob; we were very fortunate."

"Yes; all we will have to do now is to make a prisoner of the servant, and tie and gag him. Then, when the drugged wine gets in its work, we will have a good chance to secure the papers if they have not already been taken."

"True."

Perhaps ten minutes elapsed, and then the servant returned. There was a broad grin on his face.

"They're pourin' the wine down at a great rate," he said, "and I think they'll begin to feel kind of sick at their stomachs pretty soon."

"How many are there of them?" asked Dick.

"Three."

"General Howe is one of them?"

"Yes. They've just found some papers that were left by the rebels, an' they are in high spirits."

The youths looked at each other quickly. This was good news and bad both. It was good news to learn that the papers had only just been found, and it was bad news to learn that they had been found at all.

"Have they read the papers yet?" said Dick.

"Not yet," he replied. "General Howe was too eager to sample the wine, and he stuck the papers in the inside pocket of his coat. He said they would finish the wine and then examine the papers. I guess they'll wait awhile longer than that, eh?"

"I think so," said Dick, significantly, and with a sly wink at Bob.

The three stepped to the open door of the kitchen, and listened. They could hear the sound of the voices of the officers, who were talking and laughing.

Soon the tones of the voices became less loud and boisterous, however, and presently were not heard at all, and Dick and Bob knew that the time had come for them to act.

They exchanged glances, and then of a sudden Dick seized the servant by the throat with a grip of iron.

The fellow was taken wholly by surprise, and this, with the squeezing from Dick's ironlike fingers, almost caused the fellow's eyes to pop out.

He struggled, but of course it availed him nothing, for Bob seized him by the arms, pulled them together behind the man's back, and bound the wrists.

"I do not intend to harm you, my friend," said Dick to the helpless man. "You have served us too good a turn to permit of our doing you a serious injury. All we wish to do is to assure your silence for half an hour or so, and then you will be freed, in all likelihood."

The man understood, Dick knew, and a relieved look appeared in his eyes, but when he felt himself strangling he struggled fiercely.

It was no use, however. The man was forced to succumb, and soon lapsed into unconsciousness.

Then the "Liberty Boys" bound the fellow's legs, and gagged him, after which they made their way to the room occupied by the British officers, and opening the door, looked in.

A glance was all that was needed to tell them all.

The British officers had succumbed to the drugged wine, and the "Liberty Boys" entered the room, and secured the important papers.

Thanks to the information which the servant had given them, they knew right where to look for them, and Dick secured the papers from the pocket of General Howe, who lay stretched out on the floor.

Scarcely had the youth secured the papers and placed them in his own pocket before they heard the front door open.

Some one was coming.

They could tell by the trampling sound that there were several of the newcomers, and stopping only long enough to blow out the candles, the youths slipped out of the room, and tiptoed along the hall to the rear of the building.

They made their way out of the house in the same manner that they had entered, and just as they passed through the window they heard loud cries of amazement and consternation, which came from the room where the insensible officers lay.

"We will have to get out of this in a hurry, Bob," said Dick.

The men who had entered the building were three in number, and were British officers. When they found General Howe's room in darkness they were surprised, and called the general's name, but of course received no reply.

One of their number happened to have flint and steel, and soon struck a light. When they saw the three officers in an unconscious condition their amazement was unbounded, and their anger flamed up.

"This is the work of rebels!" cried one of the officers. "Sound the alarm at once."

Two of the officers rushed out and gave the alarm, and soon the camp was in a turmoil of excitement.

Some thought that General Howe had been killed by rebels, right in his own room, and none of them had a very clear idea of just what it was that had happened, but they did understand that it was thought the rebels were in the camp, and a search was at once instituted, in the hope that the guilty parties might be found.

It was like a hornet's nest after a boy has poked it with a stick, and Dick and Bob were in a measure protected by the turmoil and excitement, for the soldiers were running wildly in all directions, and no one was capable of sizing up those whom he encountered.

The result was that the youths managed to reach a point close to the earthworks without having been suspected, and then, seizing upon a favorable opportunity, they leaped over the works and made a dash down the slope.

A sentinel saw them, and fired his musket, but the bullet went wild. Seeing that he had not done the fugitives any damage, he set up a yell.

"The rebels! The rebels!"

This attracted attention, of course, and the soldiers came rushing to the spot, but by the time they got there Dick and Bob had disappeared from sight. The sentinel pointed

in the direction the fugitives had gone, however, and redcoats rushed wildly down the slope in pursuit.

To no avail. The "Liberty Boys" had got a good start and being very swift of foot, reached the boat, entered and were well out in the river before the leading redcoats reached the stream.

"Well, that was a lively experience," laughed Bob.

"Yes, and the best part of it is that we succeeded in our undertaking, and were not injured in any way," said Dick.

"You secured the papers, then?" asked Mark Morris.

"Yes I have them here in my pocket, Mark."

"That's good. General Washington will be delighted, won't he?"

"I think he will, Mark."

And he was. When Dick appeared before him, half an hour later, and held out the papers, a look of joy overspread the great man's face.

"And so you succeeded!" he exclaimed. "Dick, you are a wonderful young man. You have rendered a great service to me, and to the great cause of Liberty, and in the name of the people of America, I thank you."

"You are welcome, sir, and Bob Estabrook is as much entitled to thanks as am I, sir. He was with me."

"Well, give Bob my compliments, and say that he is included in the thanks which I extended to you."

"He will be pleased, sir."

The commander-in-chief took the papers and counted them, and examined them closely.

"Yes, they are all here, and are practically intact," said. "Again I thank you and your brave comrade, Dick."

"You are more than welcome, I assure you, your excellency."

Then Dick told the story of the securing of the papers, and the general was delighted when he learned that the British officers had not seen the contents of the papers.

He thanked the youth again and again for his wonderful work, and when Dick went to his quarters and told Bob what the great man had said, the youth was delighted, and grinned in a satisfied way.

As is recorded in history, the British captured New York on the 15th day of September, it being impossible to hold the city, but the "Liberty Boys" had done their share toward helping hold it while they had remained there.

THE END.

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